

Srimate Ramanujay Namah

Amarkatha *Srimadbhagawata*



Srikrishna Prapnnachari

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Background

How events in a real life are unpredictable can well be appreciated by having a look at the post-Mahabharata war developments. The scenes of Hastinapur and Dwarka suggest that turn of events is beyond the control of human beings. In Hastinapur, the victory in the war for *pandav* was at the cost of almost losing the entire second generation. None of their sons could survive. The sole survivor from the third generation of grandsons was Parikshit who was son of Abhimanyu. When the war was almost over, and Duryodhana was breathing his last, his sympathiser Aswathama stealthily entered into the *pandav's* camp at night and severed the heads of sleeping sons of Draupadi assuming them to be five *pandav* brothers. This is how the second generation was wiped out almost in a split second, and instead of enjoying the moments of victory, the *pandav's* camp fell under a pall of mourning.

The wheel of events revolved further; Aswathama was so much biased that instead of feeling sorry for unethical killings of Draupadi's sons, he further attempted to kill the last survivor of the younger generation and the survivor was Parikshit still in the mother's womb. Due to grace of Srikrishna, Parikshit survived against his deadly attempt.

The scene in Dwarka is almost similar where *yaduvanshi* were rehabilitated after deserting Mathura under the threat of Jarasandh. Dwarka was established before Mahabharata war. Sometime after the war ended, Srikrishna intended to depart for His divine abode *vaikunthalok*. Before leaving He got an impression that *yaduvanshi* (natives of Dwarka) had

turned arrogant of their power. It so happened that irony of fate turned the wheel in reverse order. All the Dwarka's *yaduvanshi* fought among themselves and with the active participation of Srikrishna and Balaram, they were eliminated. Subsequently Balaram departed by taking yogic meditation. Srikrishna also disappeared into a rising flash of light after he was grievously injured by an arrow of a hunter. As forewarned by him, within a week of His ascension, coastal line moved vigorously, and Dwarka, the beautiful city disappeared overnight. However, a few natives had survived because they vacated Dwarka on prior information by Srikrishna. The sole youngest survivor from Srikrishna's family was Vajranabha, the son of Anirudha (grand-son of Srikrishna). Since the city of Dwarka had disappeared, Arjuna who had come there hearing the heart-rending news of Srikrishna's ascension took Vajranabha and other survivors of Dwarka back to Hastinapur and crowning Vajranabha the king of Mathura, resettled them at Mathura.

The departure of Srikrishna to His divine abode grieved *pandav* to the core of their heart, and they decided to renounce the crown in favour of Parikshit. Making him the king of Hastinapur, all the five brothers left for the Himalayas with a view to withdraw from the worldly life as a prelude to their ascension to heaven. This evidently suggests that the period of enjoyment of victory of war couldn't stay longer in face of the series of providential happenings.

Now the reigns of rule of the states of Hastinapur and Mathura were in the hands of two young men, Parikshit and Vajranabha respectively. Once Parikshit met Vajranabha and learnt about his (Vajranabha's) concern of prevailing grim desolation in

Mathura, the capital of *vrajbhumi*. They together sought advice of the sage Shandilya who was family preceptor of *yadava*. Shandilya narrated the background story behind the cause of desolation in Mathura. He advised Parikshit to help Vajranabha in rehabilitating the city again. The sage further mentioned, “*Vrajbhumi* is the land of Srikrishna; *vraj*, literally in Sanskrit means, all pervading which is srikrishna Himself. Although physically He is not present but the entire environment of *vrajbhumi* is impregnated with His divine spirit. He was complete incarnation of Narayana and came to *vrajbhumi* in *twenty-eighth dwapar* of that *kalp*. Every part and parcel of *vrajbhumi* where he was born and brought up (*gokul*, *vrindavan*, *goverdhan* and *barshana*) carry the evidence of His eternal presence. All efforts should be made to commence and continue the celebrations of spiritual events at all these places to glorify His *leela*. Udhava, the dearest friend of Srikrishna, who is now at Badrikashram, shall also join them soon once such celebrations are organised.” Thus guided by the sage, Parikshit helped organise resettling a few traders and other people from Indraprastha at Mathura. Gradually Mathura began coming back to normalcy and all the places associated with His pastime were rediscovered.

The surviving wives of Srikrishna who were also resettled at Mathura, once happened to meet Kalindi, one of His principal queens who had merged her physical identity with her genesis, the river Yamuna to continue enjoying Srikrishna’s eternal presence. She revealed that *kusumsarovar* near *goverdhan* was the venue of Srikrishna meeting His beloved *gopi*. She mentioned that Udhava cherished to stay at *kusumsarovar* in the form of shrubs, flowers,

bushes and plants for that would offer him opportunity to get smeared with the sacred foot-dust of *gopi* who were fortunate to get His close company. She advised them to organise chanting of His glory at *kusumsarovar*. When Parikshit and Vajranabha learnt about the advice of Kalindi, they immediately organised His glory chanting celebration at *kusumsarovar*.

Attracted by the joyous moments of such celebration, although Udhava was at Badrikashram, he couldn't help and appeared there at *kusumsarovar*. Udhava noticed all present there fully engrossed in the recitation of His glory. He became very glad and offered affectionate respect to each of them. Udhava embraced Parikshit for he was fortunate to get his company who had received His special blessings beginning from the time when he was in his mother's womb. He revealed to him that Srikrishna before His ascension had disclosed that He would manifest in the form of *amarkatha srimadbhaagawata* which has been revealed in the past by Sankarshana to Sankadika, who transferred that to Sankhyayan, and further it was transferred to Brihaspati and Parashara. Parashara propagated this holy *katha* to Maitreya, who further recited it to Vidura and thus it got wider propagation in the terrestrial world. Therefore he proposed to commence the holy recitation of *srimadbhagawata* at *kusumsarovar* also. At the same time Udhava also advised Parikshit to win over and restrain *kaliyuga* whose pangs were getting severer since its advent following the ascension of Srikrishna. He asked Parikshit to set out immediately on such mission. Parikshit consenting to his proposal expressed his

feeling of getting deprived from the opportunity of listening to holy *srimadbhaagawata* which was set to be recited soon by Udhava. Udhava advised him, “Do not worry about this at the moment, you will have special opportunity of listening this *amarkatha* recited by Shukdeo in due course.”

While Parikshit left the place as advised by Udhava, Vajranabha handed over the reign of rule to his son Pratibahu, and enjoyed the listening of *katha* with full concentration. By listening to holy *katha* he got a pleasant vision that perpetually he got a place among the rare icons¹ adorning the sole of Srikrishna’s right foot sole. What he found that he was merged in the *vajra* icon of the lord’s holy lotus foot-sole. His name Vajra, thus proved its worth. The benefit of *katha* was immensely reaped by others also; His surviving wives experienced a vision in which they found themselves merged in the soothing rays emanating from the nails of His holy lotus feet.

Once, one puzzling scene attracted the attention of Narada at *vrajbhumi* (*vrindavan*). A young woman attended by several beautiful maidens was trying to raise the full consciousness of two old and wearied men lying by her side. Her efforts appeared to be futile and disappointing. Compassionate Narada drew closer and enquired whether he could help them. The woman mentioned, “ I am Bhakti and was born in *Dravida desha* (Tamil Nadu) on the bank of river Tamraparni. I have been reared young in Karnataka. In Maharashtra people showered profound affection on me. While in Gujarat I turned old. These two semiconscious men are

¹ The divine icons over sole of Narayana’s feet are *dhwaj*, *ankush*, *vajra*, *sankha*, *chakra*, and several other groups of *auspicious lines*.

my sons: *Jnan* (*gyan*) and *Vairagya*. It is surprising that when we reached *vrindavana* I regained my youth but my two sons are still old and wearied. The attending maidens are the sacred rivers. They are helping me to rejuvenate the vitality of my sons.” She offered her respect to him and continued, “O, great sage Narada ! with your efforts Dhruva and Prahlad have attained the ultimate bliss and release from bondage. Be kind, bless my sons, and me as well. In *satyayuga*, *Treta*, and *Dwapar* meditation, and *ygya* helped in gaining salvation, but in *kaliyuga* they are non-functional. Narayana sent me to the terrestrial world with *Jnan* and *Vairagaya* my two sons, and *mukti* as a maid assistant. Looking to the attitude of the beings here, *mukti* found herself redundant, and was asked to go back to *vaikuntha* but we remained here for the sole benefits of the beings. In *kaliyuga* the greatest means for liberation and ultimate salvation is the recitation of the name of the Lord Narayana. Now while coming to *vrindavan* I got my vitality but my sons are still in the state of weariness. I can’t help them. Kindly be kind on me and get my sons revitalised.” Narada also tried by reciting several *vedic mantra* in their ears to bring them back to their senses but nothing worked. He guessed that by coming to *vrindavan* they must have attained the inner pleasure of the self and that is why they look like sleeping but in fact they enjoy the bliss of knowing their self. This land lovingly called *vrindavan* is the land of *bhakti* (fondness of Lord’s pleasure). However, he assured to come back with some remedy for them.

In the meanwhile, frustrated Narada, heard a celestial voice “Consult saints and sages”. Narada was a little confused since there was no further guidance in

the celestial voice. He moved around several sacred places and contacted several saints and sages but no solution appeared to be emerging. In due course he reached Badrikashrma and was contemplating to resort to meditation. In the meanwhile he noticed sages *sanakadika*, and narrated the incident of *vrindavana* to them. Sanakadika advised him to organise recitation of *srimadbhaagawata katha* on the sacred bank of Ganga at Haridawar, and he also elaborated its significance for the amelioration of the beings suffering from the worldly afflictions. Narada was reminded as to how he had learnt that from Brahma, which he had passed on to Vyas who subsequently composed the *amarkatha*, and the same was recited by Shukdeo, pious son of Vyas, to Parikshit.

Immediately Narada organised the *katha*'s recitation as advised by *sanakadika*. Large number of audience from all walks of the lives (saints, sages, sacred rivers, pilgrimage places, gods, human beings) assembled to hear the *katha* from the *sanakadika*. During the currency of the *katha* when its significance was being elaborated, a miraculous scene was noticed. *Bhakti* appeared dancing with her two sons, *Jnan* and *Vairagya*, at the venue and presented an oral melodious song of “*srikrishna! Govinda! hare murare!, hey nath! Narayan! Vasudeva!.* श्रीकृष्ण ! गोविन्द ! हरे मुरारे ! हे नाथ ! नारायण वासुदेव !” Sanakadika mentioned, “The potential of *srimadbhagwat katha* is obvious that by listening to its recitation *Bhakti*, *Jnan*, and *Vairagya* could regain their vitality, and they have automatically emerged from the stream of the *katha* being presented here.”

There is another story from the lives of the domestic world. Atmadeva was a pious man born in a village located on the bank of the river Tungbhadra. For long time he remained issueless. Once Atmadeva met a saint who told him that in the present life he had no chance of any issue. On great persuasion of Atmadeva, the saint gave him a fruit advising that his wife should eat it with due reverence. When Dhundhuli got that fruit from her husband she began imagining the associated labour pains and efforts required to carry a child in the womb for ten months. She hatched out a plan. Her brother's wife was pregnant and she made a secret pact with her that she (brother's wife) would hand over the child to her after its birth." Dhundhuli didn't disclose her game plan to anybody else and offered that fruit to her domestic cow. She confined herself to inside the house pretending that she was carrying a child in her womb. When her brother's wife delivered a child, that child was brought to her and was declared to be Dhundhuli's child. The child was given a name, Dhundhakari. On the other hand, the cow also delivered a calf having the form of a human being but the ear of a cow. Atmadeva was glad to see that calf and he reared that up with due care, calling him, Gokarna. In course of time Gokarna became learned person and renounced the domestic life. He began moving from one sacred place to another.

When Duhndhakari grew young, he turned out to be very cruel. He enjoyed killing the children. Gradually he began disrespecting his parents. His mother, Dhundhuli died of falling in a well. Father deserted home and became a wanderer. Duhndhakari fell into bad company of sex workers and began gathering money by robbing others only to please those

women. Once when he collected large amount of precious jewels, those women killed him and decamped with all the money and jewels. Due to premature death by killing, Duhndhakari became a ghost. He began haunting the neighbours and made their life miserable. Gokarn, once happened to visit his paternal home. He came to know the full details about their parents and brother. At night, the ghost (Duhndhakari) appeared before him but he was not able to speak. Gokarn sprayed water over him reciting some *mantra*. This made him speak and he requested his brother to liberate him from the life of the ghost. With a view to attain his liberation, Gokarna offered essential oblations at Gaya and other sacred places. Nothing worked and Duhndhakari continued in the life of the ghost.

Lastly, Gokarna organised the recitation of *srimadbhagwat katha* at his parental home and invited the neighbouring people. Duhndhakari didn't have visible form, so he joined the audience by finding a place inside a bamboo piece having seven knots. Duhndhakari listened to the *katha* with rapt attention, and every day on completion of the *katha*, one knot of the bamboo piece used to split producing loud sound. On the seventh day, when the *katha* concluded, the last seventh knot burst, and there came out a handsome person. He offered a prayer to Gokarna as a mark of obligation that he was liberated from the life of a ghost only because of him. In the meanwhile, a divine plane arrived and carried away Duhndhakari to the celestial world.

Srimadbhagawat, (in short, reverently called *bhagawata*) has single origin emanating from Narayana. In different periods of time, it had been revealed through different sources. The latest one which is found presently, is narrated

by Suta to the sages gathered at Naimisharnya. Suta mentioned that he learnt it from Shukdeo while being narrated to Parikshit. Shukdeo had learnt it from his father Vyas. It was Narada who prompted Vyas to compose *bhaagawata* for the common welfare. Narada had also revealed to him that he had learnt it on different occasions from different sources. His sources were Brahma and Sanakadika sages.

Udhava had learnt it from Srikrishna Himself, and at that time Maitreya was also present there. Maitreya had also been fortunate to learn it from Parasara. Parasara had learnt from Sankhyayan, and it was Sanakadika who revealed it to him. The source of learning to Sanakdika is from Sankarshan, one of the four principal emanations of Narayana.

Srimadbhaagwat mahapurana is the creation of Vyas, and is preceded by Mahaabhaarata. Although Mahaabhaarata is the most profound epical scripture, Vyas was not happy with his great work (Skandh-1, chapter 4, 5), and as advised by Narada he created this one which is now-a-days most popular among the common mass like Raamayan. The name “*Bhaagawata*” itself indicates that it is dedicated to Narayana. It has twelve *skandha* (books), each one containing several stories (*adhyaaya*, or chapters), and sum of all chapters is three hundred thirty five. The advent of Narayana from time to time over earth has been in different forms: *dasavtar* (ten prime incarnations picked up from 24 incarnations). Almost all His incarnations are covered in *bhaagwata* giving significant deliberations on the shrikrishna incarnation in *skandha-10*.

The setting of the *bhaagwata* is narration by Suta to *Shaunkadik* sages. He repeats how Shukadeva (or Shuka), the glorious son of Vyas recited the entire *bhaagwata* to Parikshit (the curious king of Hastinapur, son of Abhimanyu and grandson of Arjuna). During course of recitation, the reference of other speakers are also there who had narrated this to other audiences. Brahma and Narada are found to be the initiator of this work in *skandh-2*.

In *skandh-3*, Maitreya is found to recite it to Vidura, and Maitreya introduced its genesis from his *guru*, Paraasara, who had earlier received it

from great links of *sanakadik* (*sanak, sanandan, sanatan, and sanatkumar*) and *sankarshana*. All the speakers deal fully with the initiation of the creation from Narayan to Brahma, from Brahma to sages, *prajapatis* and *swambhuva* Manu and the succeeding inheritors. The essence of *bhakti* (devotional cult) is further put into philosophic form of *sankhya yoga* from the mouth of Kapila (Narayan's incarnation), son of Devahuti (daughter of Manu).

skandh-4 continues with the description of the first inheritors of Manu, and the story of Dhruva (the most brilliant devotional star), and other kings Ben, and Prithu whose contributions to the expanse of the creation have been very significant.

Skandh-5 continues with the stories of the inheritors of Manu, after Dhruva, and describes the structure of universe, setting of stars and planets in detail. The subtle philosophy of devotion is well established from the story of Bharat (*Jada Bharata*) describing the links to his several past and present births and lives.

Skandh-6 stands out with the examples of Ajamil and Vritrasur who had opted unscrupulous life style but received the direct attention of the supreme Narayan blessing them with ultimate emancipation, bestowing liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Another famous devotional star, Prahlad is covered fully in *skandh-7* with the novel incarnation of Naryan as Nrisimha (man with lion's head). The significant code of conduct of the worldly domestic life is well described in this *skandh*.

The stories of *skandha-8* are about liberation of the elephant king (*gajendra*), and the dwarf incarnation (*vaman*) who could do the most wondrous work of (*trivikram*) measuring the universe by steps, in total contrast to His body size. The magic works of delusion (*maya*) consolidates among the beings, and the created lives of gods, demons including other creatures are made more attractive and meaningful by the yields obtained from the great exploratory adventure of ocean churning (*samudra manthan*): poison, nectar, horse, *lakshmi* (wealth goddess), *dhanvantri* (preceptor of physical well being), liquor (to exchange carnal pleasure), super gem (*kaustubha*), etc.

Breaking down further the expanse of creation, most of the forefathers of solar and lunar dynasties of kings (Yayati, Ikshavaku, Nimi etc.) are dealt at length in *skandha-9*. Besides incarnation of Raama, the preceding lineage of srikrishna is described chronologically. The immunity of devotees against evil eyes is illustrated by the instructive stories of Ambrisha. The significance of sacrifice in life is demonstrated by the characters of Rantideva.

Srikrishna is the rare axiom of skandh-10 incorporating in detail all the events from His birth in a royal prison through his nomadic childhood in Mathura and Vrundavan to His royal life in self established palatial forts of Dwaraka. This *skandh* is the largest among all the twelve *skandh*, scripted in 91 chapters, compared to 335 chapters of the entire *bhaagawata*.

The meditational essentials for a true devotee are the subject matter of *skandh-11*. This *skandha* appears to be the essence of the entire *bhaagawata*. The story of Duttatreya and his preceptors is most practical demonstration of an ideal domestic life. The discourses with Udhav are the gems among all stories.

Skandh-12 contains several topics rendering completion to *bhaagawata*. Sublime end of Parikshit is concluded. The eternity of Narayan is once again illustrated by a live reference to the spiritual experience of Markandeya whom *balmukunda* manifested in quite a wondrous style establishing the role and significance of ever existing real delusion (*maya* – one realisable variant of *purusha* and *prakriti*). The eternal existence of the trine structure of the creation by *jeeva*, *jagat* and *ishwar* is well concluded in this last *skandh*.

Parikshit skandh (19 chapters)

1. The great war of *Mahabharata* was fought in eighteen days. It was the last day of the war when Duryodhana was lamenting in his death bed with his broken thighs. As a revenge of defeat, Aswathama assured him that he would eliminate the *pandav*. To achieve his objective, same day after the sunset, Aswathama sneaked into the camps of *pandav*. In the darkness of the night, he beheaded (1/7)² five sleeping sons of Draupadi mistaking them as five *pandavs*. When the heads were brought to the dying Duryodhana, he examined them and told Aswathama that the heads belonged to the five sons of Draupadi and not to the *pandav*. Duryodhana died before the sunrise, but Aswathama nursed in his heart the hatred against *pandav*. All the sons of *pandav*, including the last five beheaded by Aswathama, were killed. Abhimanyu, son of Arjun, was the great warrior and he was killed on the thirteenth day of the war over the battle ground *kurukshetra*. His wife Uttara was carrying a child in her womb. Aswathama, in a bid to completely eliminate the inheritance of *pandav*, did not spare that opportunity also, and he charged (1/8) a deadly missile against the child in the womb. She rushed to Srikrishna for help, who saved the child by using His *sudarshana chakra*. The child was born, later, safely and came to be known as Parikshit. In fact, he had a glimpse of Srikrishna's divine form with all His four hands equipped with divine symbols of *sankha*, *chakra*, *gada*, and *padma*, in the mother's womb itself. After the birth, he carried that memory of the divine form and his eyes always were in search of that form. Although his formal name was Vishnurat (1/12), but he came

² The figures in the parentheses are reference to the original Sanskrit text or the author's earlier publication in English "*The Crest Jewel :Srimadbhaagawata Mahapuran with Mahabharata*". The first figure is *skandh*, and the second one is the corresponding chapter of that *skandha*.

to be known as Parikshit, which literally meant someone searching or examing a definite goal or target.

2. Subsequently Parikshit was crowned king by his grandfathers (*Pandav*) who renounced their kingdom and set out for Himalayas after hearing the news of Srikrishna's ascension to the divine abode

3. Later, once he encountered *kaliyuga* (disguised as a well dressed person- **1/17**) torturing *dharma* (an ox limping on one leg) and *prithivi* (mother earth manifested as a cow). During *satayuga dharma* (ox) had four legs, the other three legs were badly damaged by the sinful acts of the beings during the course of *treta*, *dwapar*, and *kaliyuga*. Parikshit intended to kill *kaliyuga* but spared him on compassionate ground.

4. Once while moving around in the forest he incurred Shringi's curse (**1/18**). He was very thirsty and in search of drinking water, he entered into the hut of a meditating saint (named Shamik). When the saint didn't respond to his demand, he got irritated. While coming out he saw a dead snake lying on the ground. He picked up the dead snake and wrapped around the meditating saint's neck and left for his palace. The saint's son, Shringi was playing outside, and when he heard about the incident, he cursed the king his death of snake bite in a week.

5. Hearing about the curse, the king renounced royal life in favour of his son Janmejaya, and took a resort to the bank of the Ganges near Haridwar. There he got the company of saints and sages presided by Shukdeo (**1/19**).

6. He put two questions to the saintly gathering: (i) What is the most appropriate life style?, (ii) Just before dying, what ought to be done?

Samadhan skandh

(10 chpaters)

7. Shukdeo mentioned that answers to the two key questions of Parikshit was the topic of *srimadbhaagawata* which he had learnt from his father Vyas in *dwapar*. He would therefore recite *srimadbhaagawata* to him for his utmost benefit and help dispel his doubts about the appropriate life style to be followed before death.

8. In a day- to-day life one must cultivate the habit of *bhakti* (devotional service) to the almighty. He should perform this while attending to his domestic responsibilities as His command.

9. Nearing the end of life, one ought to renounce domestic life and take a resort at a place of pilgrimage. One should concentrate one's mind by reciting *aum* on the cosmic form of the almighty. Alternatively, one can recite the favorite names of Narayana and meditate on his *archa* form (a form having four hands equipped with divine symbols of *sankha*, *chakra*, *gada* and *padma*, fully wrapped in silken cloth, decorated with flower garlands, *kaustabha* gem and *sri - vatsa* icons over the chest).

10. Shukdeo quotes the dialogue of Narada and *Brahma* to substantiate his view points.

- Once Narada was sitting with *Brahma*. Narada asked him, “ How do you perform the activities of creation? Is it performed by you or you have got a command from any other superior power to do so? How did you possess the potential of creation ?
- *Brahma* replied, “ It is Narayana who has commanded him to do this work. He (Narayana) takes incarnations from time to time. I don't recollect my past link, but when I meditate on Him, I get guidance and things continue to happen automatically which I never imagined, nor planned accordingly to happen.”

- *Brahma* first describes the cosmic form of Narayana (2/6) and then recounts His various incarnations (2/7).

11. Parikshit made further breakdown of his two key questions earlier put to Shukdeo.

- “Narayana’s perceptible form”, how to perceive this?
- “His form of sound sleep”, what is its objective?
- “His wrapping of the entire creation – dissolution (*pralaya*)”, how it happens?
- “*Lokpal* are His organs, and He Himself manifests as *Lokpal*”, is it not contradictory?
- How many are intermediate units of time to measure an era (*yuga*), i.e., *Kalp* and *Mahakalp* ? How is the scale of time defined?
- How to appreciate past, present and future?
- Does a human being get a limited life?
- How does the bondage of deeds (*karma*) end?
- What are the different proportions of *satva*, *raja* and *tama*, which when combined together create different beings (including lesser gods)?
- How does the birth of a being (over land, in water or in sky) or creation of objects (river, mountain etc) take place?
- How is *brahmada* (universe) dimensioned ?
- What are the characteristics of a great soul ?
- What is *varnashrama dharma* (community life with its code of conduct)?
- What are the incarnations of Narayana and why do they happen?
- What are special and ordinary duties of a human being?
- How is Narayana worshipped?
- What is *adhyatma yoga* (self realization)?

- What are the various forms of *veda*, *purana*, *itihasa* and other religious scriptures?
- How do creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe take place?
- How to possess wealth, divinity and pleasure ?
- How does birth of a soul take place after the dissolutions?
- How is Narayana independent? How does He discard the delusion (*maya*) selflessly?

12. Shukdeo commenced thus, his explanations over the king's enquiries, "Once *Brahma* was in a dilemma and was not able to commence the creation work. He heard a voice twice asking him to perform *tapa* (penance). He performed penance by meditating for one hundred divine years. Narayana pleased over his penance appeared before him. He showed *Brahma* His *vaikunthloka* and then explained the cause of the creation". Four stanzas (2/9 – sloka 32 through 35) are called *chatuhsloki bhaagawata* and contain the primordial facts about the nature of the universe. The four stanzas concisely set forth the eternity of all the three entities: (i) universal soul (*bhagwan* - God), (ii) creation (*srishti*, *jagat*, *maya* etc.), (iii) *jeeva* (being), and the significance of *bhakti* (refuge in Narayana) which helps understand the interwoven perpetuity of *jeeva*, *jagat* and *bhagwan*.

Srishti skandh (Vidur – Maitreya skandh)

(33 chapters)

Initially *Brahma* was assigned the duty of creation. He undertook this assignment by resorting first to *mansik srishti*, i.e., creating by mental resolve only. In this process he created several saints and sages but they didn't help him in expanding the creation as they resorted to the life of recluse and remained involved in meditation. Later he created a couple, Manu and Satrupa who obeyed his command and expanded the creation by sexual indulgence. Subsequently *Brahma* delegated his power of creation to several *prajapati* in various periods of time. Among *prajapatis* Daksha is very famous. He was born (skandha 6/4) from Pracheta and Marisha (4/30 - daughter of Pramlocha), and therefore, he was also called Pracheta Daksha. Initially he also resorted to mental creation and created several gods, human beings etc but none helped him in expanding his creation. Subsequently he took to penance in Vindhyachala at *aghamarahan teertha*. His prayer was *hamsguhai* which caused *srihari* to appear before him. *Srihari* handed over a wife called Asikni (daughter of Panchajana *prajapati*) to help Daksha create further adopting a domestic life and by sexual indulgence with her. The time of *mansik srishti* was thereafter over for Daksha.

13. Mahabharata was over and *pandav* were the sovereign of Hastinapur. Dhritrashtra and Gandhari, the parents of *kaurav* adopted the forest life where they subsequently died. Vidura was contemporary to Dhritrashtra and Pandu. Although he was the son of a royal maid, he was given great honour in the stately matters and he was the principal advisor to the king Dhritrashtra.

14. Parikshit enquired, "Why Vidura deserted the royal life and took to pilgrimage before the great war begun?" Shukdeo mentioned that when Vidura's advice for doing justice to *pandav* was not heeded, he preferred to quit Hastinapur. He continued moving around various pilgrimage

centres and when he arrived in *prabhas kshetra* he happened to meet Udhava. He learnt from him that after the end of Mahabharata, Srikrishna had also departed for His divine abode. Udhava also advised Vidura, “He should meet Maitreya who will recite *bhaagawata* to him which is now the spiritual representative of Srikrishna”. Saying this, as advised by Srikrishna, Udhava moved towards Badrikashram. Srikrishna, before leaving for His eternal divine abode (*vaikunthalok*), had stated to Udhava that in the past lives Udhava had performed several *ygya* and his *punya* had culminated to attain *moksha* to him; he was then in his last birth only. He was also advised to spend the balance days of his present life at Badrikashrama. Before Udhava had left for Badrikashrma, Maitreya had also arrived there when he was last seen with Srikrishna. At that time Srikrishna revealed His divinity what was earlier revealed to Brahma by Narayana, and Vyas composed the same as *chatuhsloki bhagawata* in *skandha-2* (*adhyaya-9, sloka 32-35*).

15. Vidura, on the advice of Udhava, began searching Maitreya whom he found at Haridwar. He addressed him as friend of Vyas who composed *amar-katha* (i.e., *srimadbhaagawata*). He expressed several doubts to Maitreya about the origin of afflictions to a human being. His other questions were regarding the cultivation of devotion to the Lord, and how He created the universe; the role of *maya*; difference between *gyan* and *bhakti*, etc.

16. Maitreya spoke, “ O! Vidura, you are worthy son of Vyas, therefore, you are eligible to listen to *amar-katha*. The creation has been commenced by Narayana Himself and first He manifested *Virat Purusha*”. As regards his several other questions he mentioned that they were covered in *bhagawata katha* which he would recite to him for his benefits.

17. Maitreya mentioned, “The version³ of the *katha* which he is going to recite was the one which Sankarshan (*sheshjee* – the serpent couch of Narayana) *bhagwan* recited to Sanakadik sages. In the netherworld Sheshjee was meditating and moved by the prayer of the Sanakadik He opened His graceful eyes. Sages wanted to know about the divinity of Narayana. In order to drive home the point He recited *bhagawata katha* to them. Sanakadik later recited the *katha* to Samkhyayan *muni* who in turn recited to Parashara and Brihaspati. At the instance of Pulstaya, I listened this *katha* from my guru Parashara”.

18. Once all the beings were coalesced together in subtle form, and were merged in Narayana Who was reclining over the serpent (*seshajee*) couch with His closed eyes. He commanded (3/8) *kala-chakra* (time cycle) to remind Him by the end of one thousand *chaturyuga*. As commanded he was awakened by *kala-chakra* at the appointed time and the *kala-chakra* transformed itself in a lotus stem with a flower at the top. The stem came out of the navel of Narayana. Narayana created four headed *Brahma* seated over the louts flower. *Brahma* tried hard to find out his genesis and purpose of his being there. Looking all around he couldn't see anything. In vain, he went up and down the lotus stem several times to find out his origin and location. He then heard the direction for meditation, and on completion of the same after one hundred divine years he could be able to see Narayana sleeping over Sheshjee in the celestial ocean. He found himself over the lotus stem coming out of His navel. He offered a passionate prayer to Narayana.

19. Narayana could realize the nervousness of *Brahma* because of his loneliness over the stem. He revealed, “All the subtle beings wrapped in Him would unfold steadily to him.

³ This version of *Srimadbhagawata* in the dialogue of Sankarshna and Sankadika begins with the enquiry about Narayana Himself, whereas the Shukdeo – Parikshit version is marked by the Parkishita's queries about the worldly life.

He would never be alone and he must start the creation by meditating on Me. Everything was in the past, and the same would be manifested from Him in the present, and they would continue to be in the future”.

20. It is said the lotus seat of *Brahma* is as large as the expanse of *bhu*, *bhuva* and *swah*.

21. There are ten stages of creation and they are covered in two broad categories of *prakriti* (nature), and *vaikriti* (modified). (3/10)

- The first six ones are under *prakriti srishti*: (i) *Mahatatva*, (ii) *Ahankar* consisting of earth, five elements, five knowledge organs, and five action organs, (iii) *bhutha sarga*, (iv) sense organs, (v) gods of knowledge and action organs, (vi) *avidya*
- The last four are in *vaikriti* category. (vii) plants and trees having their roots in the earth and they lack the knowledge organs, (viii) lesser beings of animals and birds, (ix) human beings, (x) *kaumar sarga* and *deva sarga* combining the characteristic of *prakriti* and *vaikriti* together. In *kaumar sarga* sages are covered commencing from sanakadika, and in *deva sarga* gods, *pitra*, *gandharva*, *kinnara*, *yaksha*, *apsara*, *vidyadhara*, *asura* etc are covered.

22. Matter is *parmanu* in its smallest size and *brahmand* in its largest form. Two *parmanu* make one *anu*, three *anu* make one *trasrenu*. One can visually see the dust particles of the size of *trasrenu* in the beam of sun rays coming out of a small hole. (3/11)

23. Time taken by the sun rays to cross three *trasrenu* is called *truti*.

- 100 *truti* = 1 *vedha*; 3 *vedha* = 1 *lav*; 1 *nimesha* = 3 *lav*;
- 1 *kshana* = 3 *nimesha*; 1 *kashtha* = 5 *kshana*; 1 *laghu* = 15 *kashtha*;

- 1 *danda* (*nadika*) = 15 *laghu*; 2 *nadika* = 1 *muhurtha*;
- 1 *prahar* = 6 / 7 *muhurtha* (transition from day to night / night to day), 1 *yama* = $\frac{1}{4}$ th of day or night.
- 1 day / night = 4 *prahara*; 1 *paksha* (fortnight) = 15 days and nights; 1 month = 2 *paksha*; 1 *ritu* = 2 months; 1 year = 6 *ritu*; 1 *ayana* = 6 months; 1 year = 2 *ayana*.
- 1 day and night of *pitra* = 2 *paksha* of human beings
- 1 day and night of *deva* (gods) = 2 *ayana* of human beings
- 1 *samvatsar* (1 year) = one complete cycle of sun in 12 zodiac signs
- 1 *parivatsar* = 1 year of Jupiter; 1 *idavatsar* = 1 *savana* year; 1 *anuvatsar* = 1 moon year; 1 *vatsar* = 1 year of galaxy of stars
- 1 *chaturyuga* (*satyugs*, *treta*, *dwapar*, *kaliyuga*) = 12000 *divya varsha*
- 1 *satyuga* = 4000 *divya varsha*; 1 *treta* = 3000 *divya varsha*; 1 *dwapar* = 2000 *divya varsha*; 1 *kaliyuga* = 1000 *diva varsha*;
- Transition from one *yuga* to another is measured in hundreds of *divya varsha* which is double the digit used in thousand of their period; Thus *satyuga* to *treta* = $2 \times 4 = 800$ *divya* years, *treta* to *dwapar* = 600 *divya* years; *dwapar* to *kaliyuga* = 400 *divya* years; *kaliyuga* to *satyuga* = 200 *divya* years.
- 1 *chaturyuga* = $(4,000 + 800) + (3,000 + 600) + (2,000 + 400) + (1,000 + 200) = 12,000$ *divya* years
- 1 *deva* (*divya varsh*) year = 360 years (human beings); 1 *deva* day = 360 days (human beings)
- 1 *kaliyuga* = $360 \times (1000 + 200) = 4,32,000$ years (human beings);

- 1 *dwapar* = 2 *kaliyuga*, 1 *treta* = 3 *kaliyuga*, 1 *satyuga* = 4 *kaliyuga*
- 1 day of *Brahma* = 1 *kalp* (present one is *baraha kalp*) = 1000 *chaturyuga*
- 1 *kalp* = 14 *manvantrar* (period of one Manu)
- *Brahma*'s night is the period of dissolution
- *Brahma*'s one life cycle = 100 years (where 1 day = 1 *kalp* of 1000 *chaturyuga*). Half life 50 years is called *parardha* (the present one is second *parardh* where the first *kalp* is continuing and is called *varaha kalp*). The first *parardha* had the first *kalp* as *brahm kalp* and the last one as *padm kalp*)

24. *Brahma* begins creation (3/12)

- **First creation** of *Brahma* is *vriti* (*avidya*, *moha*, *mahamoha*, *tamisra*, *andhatamisra*).
- **Second creation** was Sankadika (Sanat, Sandana, Sanatana, Sanatkumar).
- **Third creation** is Rudra.
- **Fourth creation** is group of ten sages (Marichi from mind, Atri from eyes, Angira from mouth, Pulastya from ears, Pulha from navel, Kratu from hand, Bhrigu from skin, Vashistha from soul, Daksha from thumb, Narada from lap), and Kardam from shadow.
- **Dharma** was born from *Brahma*'s chest and Narayan came from Dharma and his wife Murthi. Adharma was born from his back who created Mrityu.
- *Veda* were created, *rik* from the eastern mouth, *yajur* from the southern one, *Sam* from the western mouth, and *atharva* from his northern mouth.
- In the same *kalp* *Brahma* discarded his body and got new bodies again. Two significant events on discarding his body are given below. However, besides this he discarded his body two more times (3/20) for he was

attacked by *rakhasa* and *yaksha*. On advice of Narayana he transformed his body into a beautiful woman from whom they produced *gandharva* (celestial singer) and *apsara* (celestial dancer). On another occasion getting fascinated by his own handsome image *Brahma* produced *kinnara* and *kimpurusha* who assumed his handsomeness as *Brahma* discarded his body.

- He created Sarswati and grew lust against her. It was not proper for him and on the advice of his sons Marichi and others he discarded his body and got a new body. His previous body transformed into fog.
- He split his body into two parts creating Manu and Shatarupa.
- Manu and Shatarupa had two sons (Priyavrata and Uttanpad), and three daughters (Aakuti, Devahuti, and Prasuti). Aakuti was married to Ruchi Prajapati, Devahuti to Kardama (who was created from shadow of *Brahma*), and Prasuti was married to Daksha.

25. *Varaha avatar*: Manu and Satrupa demanded place to stay and expand the creation as desired by *Brahma*. The earth was drowned in the ocean and *Brahma* became concerned to retrieve the landmass back to handover to the primordial couple, Manu and Satrupa. As he was deeply engrossed with the problem, he saw a very tiny mass falling out of his nose. Instantly that mass assumed a very big size of a boar and jumped into the ocean. It came back with retrieved earth after killing the demon Hirnyaksh. When Varaha *bhagwan* shook His body, the body hair falling (3/22) on the earth produced *kusha* (a type of grass used for religious offerings).

26. *Hirnyakash and Hirnyakashipu*: Two demons were born from Diti (Daughter of Daksha) and Kasypa (son of Marichi). Once it so happened that it was sunset time when

Diti prevailed upon Kasyapa to cohabit with her instead of performing evening *sandhya* (rites). There was another coincidence that the security guards of Vaikuntha known as Jaya and Vijaya were cursed at the same time by Sankadik sages to become demons. They under curse became demon and got lodged in the womb of Diti and became known as Hirnyaksh and Hirnyakashipu. Kasyapa had forbade Diti for having sex during sunset time but when she didn't listen, he told her after the cohabitation that two sons would be born from her and they would be notorious demons. Diti was concerned about that but Kasyapa again consoled her that her grandson would be a very reputed saintly figure and great devotee of Lord Narayana.

27. Kapila incarnated (3/24 through 3/33): On the advice of Narayana, Devahuti (second daughter of Manu) was married to Kardama. They produced nine daughters who were married to Marichi, Atri and others. Kapila (an incarnation of Narayana) was born as only son to Kardama. Devahuti was enlightened by her own son Kapila about the *samkhya yoga* including the operational part of *bhakti* (devotional cult).⁴

- Her question to Kapila was about *purusha* and *prakriti*. He explained that the soul is *purusha* and the creation is *prakriti*. Under the influence of trine characteristics of *satva*, *raja* and *tama*, the twenty-five building blocks of *prakriti* lead *purusha* (*jeeva*) to bondage. Twenty-five building blocks are made of 5 elements (*prithvi*, *jala*, *tej*, *vayu*, *akash*: earth, water, fire, air, space respectively) + 5 elemental characteristics (*gandha*, *rasa*, *rupa*, *sparsha*, *shabd*: scent, taste, form, touch, expression respectively) + 4 inheritances (*mana*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, and *ahankar*: mind, wit, conscience,

⁴ In essence, similar content is covered in *Skandh* 11 when Srikrishna enlightens Udhava.

ego) + 10 organs (nose, tongue, eyes, skin, ear, mouth, hands, feet, phallus, anus) + 1 universal soul (in the form of eternal time period).

- The super-soul (Narayan - God) is omnipresent in *purusha* and *prakriti* but alone none can define Him; all three are eternal. Devahuti expressed her doubt, “The characteristics of elements can’t be separated from them, e.g., the taste is inseparable from water, scent from earth, brilliance from fire, etc. Similarly *purusha* is inseparable from *prakriti*, and therefore, how *jeeva* could be liberated from bondage ?” Kapila clarified by an example that fire is latent in a piece of wood, and the fire, when brought about by rubbing two wood pieces, burns them completely. Similarly the endeavour of *bhakti* (cultivating constant contemplation over His glory, His divine form equipped with *chakra*, *sankha*, *gada*, *padma*, *kaustabha*, *vanamala* and ever smiling features, and finally His lotus feet.) helps *purusha* overcome the bondage of *prakriti*.

sankalp skandh

(31 chapters)

The *skandh* begins with the story of the daughters of Devhuti, second daughter of Manu who was married to Kardama and had produced nine daughters. They were married to respective sages. The major part of the *skandh* is thereafter devoted to the legends about the inheritance of Uttanpad, the eldest son of Manu. The reputed among them are Dhruva, Prithu, and Pracheta. The name *sankalp skandh* is for strong resolve of Dhruva to attain an eternal seat against the transitory lap of his father which was denied to him by his step mother Suruchi.

28. The daughters of Devahuti (the second daughter of Manu) were married to Atri, Angira, Pulstya, Bhrigu, Vasistha and others.

- Atri was married to Anusuya and produced three sons as representative of three trinity: *Brahma*, *vishnu* and *mahesh*.
- Angira produced brilliant son Brihaspati, the preceptor of gods, from Shradha, one of the daughters of Devahuti.
- From Pulstya and his wife Havirbhu were born Agastya and Vishrava. The latter had two wives, Idvida and Keseni. Kuber was born from Idvida, where as Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishna were born from Keseni.
- Bhrigu was married to Khyati, and later one of their sons, Kavi produced Shukracharya (also called Usna), the preceptor of demons.
- Other saints were married: Vasishatha to Arundhati, Marichi to Kala, Pulaha to Gati, Kratu to Kriya, Atharva to Shanti.

29. Prasuti, the third daughter of Manu was married to Daksha *prajapati* and gave birth to sixteen daughters. One of them was Sati who was married to Shiva. Besides, thirteen

were married to *Dharma*, one (Swaha) was married to *Agni*, and one (Swadha) was married to four *pitra*.

30. Later, Sati committed self-immolation at her father's place when she noticed disrespect to her husband (Shiva) in the *ygya* organized by Daksha. In retaliation of her death, Shiva disrupted the *ygya* and beheaded Daksha, who later survived by having goat's head on the initiative of *Brahma* when due respect was showered on Shiva on resumption of the *ygya*. (4/3 – 4/7).

31. **Dhruva** was born (4/8) from Suniti and Uttanpad (one of the two sons of Manu). Suruchi, another wife of Uttanpad, once hurled an insult on Dhruva when he tried to sit in the lap of his father. Hurt by her stepmother's behaviour Dhruv resolved to attain an eternal seat and undertook a severe penance to please Narayana. He became successful following the guidelines of Narada who asked him to go to Madhuvana, a forest on the bank of the river Yamuna, near Vrindavan. There he recited uninterrupted the *dwadash mantra* “ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय *aum namo bhagwate vasudevaya*” given to him by Narada. His meditation was so sincere on *Srihari*, that he stopped taking breath in the fifth month of his penance. He was in a standing pose on one leg, and his this pose caused an eccentric loading on the earth which induced a tilt to its rotating axis. His breathless state of meditation caused short of breathing to common beings in the universe. *Srihari* was persuaded to take action on this. He rushed to Dhruva and showering His blessings on him, granted him an eternal focal seat in the universe around which all stars and sages circumambulate.

32. Dhruva was crowned king by his father, Uttanpad. His unmarried step brother, Uttama, son of Suruchi, was killed by *yaksha*. Dhruva was having two wives and one of his sons was Utkal who later became king when he went to Badrikashram renouncing his royal outfit after ruling for thirty six thousand

years. From there he rose to *vishnuloka*. His mother Suniti was also awarded the same divine status. Utakal was not interested in royal order and he renounced in favour of his cousins.

33. Further in the lineage of Dhruva, Vena was born from Ang. He was a cruel king who was later destroyed by the wraths of the sages and saints. The churning of the arms of Vena produced **Prithu** (with his wife Archi) the great emperor of the earth. He is said to be partial incarnation of *Srihari* as he carried divine symbols of *chakra* on his palm. He is credited to discover several articles from the earth's womb (4/18).

- Once there was a severe famine causing large scale starvation deaths. With a view to penalize the earth, he began chasing her who had appeared in the form of a cow. Ultimately she gave up and asked Prithu to use calves to milk the useful items from her. Several calves from all walks of the universe were invited to facilitate milking the earth cow: Manu for grains (pot was palm), Jupiter (Brihaspati) by saints for *veda* (pot was mind), Indra for nectar (golden pot) by gods, Prahlad milked wine and liquor for demons in iron pot, *gandharva* used *viswavasu* for beauty and music (in lotus pot), Takshaka for poison by snakes and scorpions (pot their mouth), banyan by trees for sap, Himalayas by mountains for minerals and metals, *Rudra* by *yaksha* and *pisacha* for blood liquor in skull, Garuda by birds for insects and fruits, and likewise.
- He performed one hundred *aswmedha* ygya despite the hindrances created by Indra out of jealousy. Indra tried to steal the ygya horse several times in different disguises. His numerous disguises created several pseudo-religious sects which mislead people to observe Indra as their principal deity. In each of his ygya

srihari appeared to honour his respect to Him and blessed him.

- Later, Prithu renounced his royal life in favour of his son, Vijitaswa and took to forest life of a recluse with his wife, Archi. Once Archi saw him dead; she lit the pyre and merged her identity in fire with her husband.

34. In the continuation of the lineage of Prithu from his son Vijitaswa, there was Prachinvarhi whose wife was the daughter of ocean, Shatdruti. During marriage her rare beauty caught the fancy of fire god also. She gave Prachinvarhi, ten sons called Pracheta (4/24). Pracheta instead of procreating and expanding their inheritance preferred meditation of *srihari*. On advice of Shankara, who handed over *rudra- stuti* (Shankara's prayer to please *sirhari*) to them, they succeeded in pleasing *srihari* by its recitation for ten thousand years standing in water.

35. In the meanwhile Narada came to Prachinvarhi, father of Pracheta, who was engaged in following *karmkand* (rituals). Narada explained him the futility of following rituals devoid of devotion to the lotus feet of *srihari*. To drive home his point he narrated the story of Puranjan (4/25 – 4/29). There were two friends, Puranjan and Avigyat. Puranjan moved around to find a life partner. He reached a beautiful city having nine entrances and guarded by a five hooded servant. He could see there a beautiful girl in an orchard attended by equally beautiful maids. Both were attracted to each other at their first glance. They stayed together for a pretty long time and produced several sons and daughters. The city was once attacked by Chandvega, the leader of *gandharva*. The five hooded serpent fought them continuously. In the meanwhile *yavan* also attacked the city. The serpent lost the battle due to long drawn fighting. He followed the enemies and Puranjan was killed. While dying he was anxious about the state of his wife. He took a birth as a female child. Prachinvarhi couldn't get the moral of the story. Narada explained, “Puranjan is *jeeva*; city

is his body. Nine gates are the sense organs i.e., two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, one mouth, one anus, one phallus. Five hooded protector serpent is the five elements of the body. *Gandharva* the invader is the time, *yavan* is old age. Avigyat is God.”. In order to get rid of the worldly attraction one has to devote time in meditation of *srihari*.

- *Srihari* impressed by Pracheta’s penance appeared before them and blessed them. He also advised them to marry the daughter of Kandu *rishi*. They followed His instruction and married together to the same woman. They lived for long years expanding the creation. Lastly on advice of Narada they took renunciation to meditate on *srihari* crowning their sons as the kings.

Jigyasa skandh
(26 chapters)

The *skandh* covers mainly the legend about Priyavrata and his inheritors. Priyavrata made seven rounds of the earth on the speed of the sun and the wheels of his chariot created seven oceans as well as seven different earth spheres. Bharat is the most illustrious inheritor whose name caused the country's (India's) name as Bharatvarsh. His (Bharat's) successive births as deer and Brahmin illustrate the cause of cycle of rebirth influenced by the *karma*. In the birth of Brahmin he became famous as *jada bharat* leading the life of a detached being, and on coincidence he once had a chance to be with the king Rahugan. The king was highly impressed by his response and curiously made several spiritual enquiries which are covered in detail in this *skandh* and that is why this *skandh* has been called *jigyasa* (curiosity) *skandh*, means curiosity to reveal more and more. The later part of the *skandh* gives details of seven different terrestrial worlds including the present earth known by *Jambudweep*. The planetary details around *Jambudweep* is the content of the later chapters. The *skandh*, before reaching concluding chapter, gives the details about *sankarshna* who as Anant keeps the equilibrium of position of all the terrestrial worlds and their planetary system by virtue of his divine potential of creating appropriate force of attraction among different planetary / celestial masses. The misdeeds of a being is well accounted for in the system of *karma*, and accordingly one is penalized by the afflictions of the spell in hell, is detailed in the last chapter.)

36. Priyavrata, the other son of Manu was initially not inclined to take up domestic life. Manu couldn't convince him, but on the pursuance of *Brahma* he was initiated into domestic life and he offered all his actions as a service to the lotus of feet of *adinarayana*. He was having two wives. He was blessed with ten sons and one daughter from one wife and

three sons from the other. His daughter was married to Shukracharya whose daughter was Devayani.

- He was deeply involved in the rule of sovereignty. Once he noticed that half of the earth was only lighted by the sun. He resolved to light the entire earth at a time and for doing that he drove his brilliant chariot seven times as faster as sun which kept half the earth lighted by the brilliance of his chariot as the other half was lighted by the sun. In doing so, the wheels of his chariot made seven deep and wide ruts which are known as seven oceans which happens to have water of different tastes: salt, sugarcane, wine, *ghee*, milk, butter-milk, and sweet. The seven separate earth sphere's were created and they are called *Jambu*, *Plaksha*, *Shalmali*, *Kusha*, *Kroncha*, *Shaka*, *Pushkar*. The reign of seven earths were given by him to his seven sons.

37. Agnidhra was in control of *Jambu dweep*. While doing penance at Sundrachala, he was attracted by a fairy, Poorvachitti, sent by *Brahma*. She gave him nine sons who became the king of nine independent parts of *Jambu dweep*. His eldest son Nabhi performed *ygya* for a son. *Srihari* having eight hands equipped with His divine weapons, appeared and blessed Himself to come as his son.

38. As a result Rishabhadev was born to Nabhi who from the beginning took interest in the domestic life and ruled the state excellently maintaining high standard of morality (**5/3 – 5/5**). He produced one hundred sons from his wife Jayanti (daughter of Indra). The eldest one Bharat, was very capable and on his name *Ajnabhkhand* of *Jambu dweep* has been renamed as *Bharatvarsha*⁵. Handing over the reign to his able

⁵ The king Bharat, son of Dushyant (*Skandha* 9/20) is also credited with similar legend on whose name the present India is called *Bharatvarsh*.

sons, he adopted the life of complete renunciation so much so that unmindfully he continued to remain naked with long grown hairs and nails. He was so self-contained that even hunger couldn't influence his life style and he maintained complete silence in his later life. At the end of his life he was in Karnataka where he was burnt to ashes in a sudden break out of a deadly forest fire. His life style at the end of his life gave birth to a religious sect who mistook him as an atheist and propagated his life style to be imitated for peace and prosperity in the life (5/6).

39. Bharata (5/7) ruled the kingdom very effectively. He performed several *ygya* and the *punya phala* of *ygya* was offered to *vasudeva* Himself. He never longed for any personal benefits from the *ygya*. At the end of his life he decided to stay on the bank of Gandaki river, near *Pulha ashram* near *Harihara kshetra* in Bihar. He worshipped sun god as a direct manifestation of Narayana Himself. Once he was reciting *pranava mantra* on the bank of Gandaki, that he saw a female deer fast crossing the river being chased by a lion. She was pregnant and she delivered the calf in the water stream and died while crossing. Bharata took care of the calf and gradually he got completely attached to the deer calf. He died contemplating about the calf, and therefore he was reborn as a deer. Due to his sacred past *karma* he died quietly as a deer and was again reborn as a *Brahmin*.

40. He spent the life of a self-realized soul completely detached from the worldly life. Once he was inducted into the carrier group of the palanquin of the king Rahugana. His movement to save insects and worms caused jerks and discomfort to the king riding the palanquin. He warned Bharata to carry him without any jerk otherwise he would be penalized. Despite the king's warning he couldn't improve. Consequently the king stopped and began reprimanding him. Bharata ignored all his shouting by saying that one could

penalize the body but not the soul. The king was a learned man so he turned towards Bharata and initiated a spiritual discourse with him. Bharata reminded the king that self realization could be attained by complete surrender to the Narayana's feet and not by learning spiritual scriptures. The body of the king and the body of *Jada* Bharata are made of the same five elements and both are prone to decay and aging. Thus the king was enlightened by Bharata who was also called *jada* Bharata (*jada* means inert or insensitive to worldly happenings) (5/12 – 5/14).

41. Chapters 5/16 – 5/20 describe the formation of *dweep* and *varsh*. In fact, before the movement of Priyavrata around the sun, there was one earth with one landmass. Subsequently it was divided into seven parts. The part which is called Jambu *dweep* is the present earth and the other six *dweep* are six different globes with oceans of different liquids surrounding them. The other six *dweep* are kept in equilibrium by their respective gravitational forces like the planetary systems surrounding the present day known earth. At that time, Jambu *dweep* was divided into nine zones called *varsh*. The human habitation was known only over the Bharat *varsh* and other *varsh* were occupied by demi-gods as extra-terrestrial beings. The present day seven continents have been formed out of Bharat*varsh*. Little is known today about the other eight *varsh* of Jambu *dweep*. The other six *dweep* are hardly known in the present day knowledge system. They make other terrestrial systems having their separate and independent planetary systems and little is known about them.

42. Chapters 5/21 – 5/24 describe the planetary system around the present earth sphere (i.e., Jambu *dweep*). The sun of Jambu *dweep* is said to have three simultaneous motions called *uttarayan*, *dakshinayan*, and *vishuvat*. The sun is said to have one main axle with a single wheel at one end of the axle such that the wheel moves over the top of *mansottara* mountain, and

the other end of the axle without any wheel rests over the *Meru* mount. There is one sub-axle attached to the main axle at its *Meru* end which extends to the *Dhruva lok* and the free end of the sub-axle in *Dhruva lok* is without any wheel. The single wheel of *mansotra* mountain has a large trajectory marked by four cities in four cardinal directions each having their separate presiding deity, i.e., *Indra* (east), *Varuna* (west), *Yama* (south), and *Chandra* (north). The sun has got a charioteer known as *Arun* who doesn't have legs and sit opposite to the sun god in his chariot. There are about sixty lacs sages (*balkhilya*) who stay praying the sun in the chariot. The chariot of the sun is pulled by seven horses. There are different rates of movement of the sun in different time which complete one cycle in approximately twenty four hours. Chapter 5/22 describes the position of other planets (Moon, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Saturn etc.) with respect to sun. The entire planetary system is in the form a coiling serpent which is called *shishumara chkra* (5/23) and its different limbs represent the location of different planets and constellation of stars (called *nakshatra*).

43. Below the earth there are seven netherlands called: *atal*, *vital*, *sutal*, *talatal*, *mahatal*, *rasatal*, and *patala*. *Mayadanav* famous demon architect lives in *atal*. In *vital* lives *hatkeshwar mahadev* on the bank of river *hataki* which produces gold. In *sutal* lives the widely known demon king *Bali* whose gates are guarded by *Narayana* Himself. In *talatal* lives a demon called *Maya* who is reputed for his devotion to *shankar*. In *mahatal* lives the serpents inheritors of *kandru*. The community of *kaliya* and *sushena* are scared of *garuda*, mount of *srihari*. There live *pani* demons, the foes of gods in *rasatal*. *Patal* is occupied by another community of snakes known for brilliant gems over their hoods, and their chief is *vasuki* who helped the churning of ocean by gods and demons.

44. Below *patal* is the seat of *anant* who has one thousand hoods. He has potential of traction of a very high order who

can draw all materials towards him, and because of this special power he is called *sankarshan*. The entire earth looks like a mustard seed over his head. During the dissolution time, he produces eleven *rudra* having three eyes and equipped with trident in their hands. They perform the destruction process of the dissolution.

45. The last chapter **5/26** is devoted to the description of twenty one varieties of hell. The affliction in life comes from the prohibited deeds undertaken by a being. Specific hell with a particular type of torture is assigned for a given misdeed in the life.

Mukti Skandh

(19 chapters)

(i) The *skandh* is devoted to the legends of salvation (*mukti*) of two sinner souls: Ajamila and Vritrasura.

(ii) How Daksha *prajapati* performed on the command of *Brahma* to expand creation is covered from 6/4 – 6/6. This part of skandh requires a close study with the skandh 4/2 and 4/30. At one place Daksha is shown as son of *Brahma* but here he is son of Pracheta. His wife is Prasuti as per skandh 4/2, but here in sixth skandh his wife is asikni who gave him sixty daughters as well as two thousand sons. Prasuti's daughters (4/2) were only sixteen and they were married to Dharma, Kasyapa and others. Asikni daughters are also shown to be married with Dharma and others but the numbers differ.

(iii) The revelation of *Narayana-kavacha* (6/8) by Viswrupa to Indra is worthy of observance for spiritual and worldly successes.

(iv) The last two chapters of the skandh end with the story of birth of forty-nine *marudgana* and the details of a year- long observance of *punsvana vrata*

46. Deeds are the seeds of rebirth. Endless attachment to the worldly gains cause rebirth. But if one realizes his mistake and repents over his misdeeds he is absolved of the sins. The realization of, and repentance over, misdeeds help purify a being from the consequent sins. But this process of securing exoneration from sins is really very difficult to happen, and therefore, one can surrender everything to the feet of *srihari* to attain the ultimate relaxation and this qualifies for the greatest repentance.

47. In this context the story of Ajamil is noteworthy. He was a learned Brahmin and used to perform religious rites meticulously. Once he fell a prey to his sexual urge seeing a

charming woman. His association with her increasingly grew and he sacrificed everything (his family and paternal properties) for sake of her happiness. He indulged in robbery, theft, and all sorts of immoral acts to earn money to maintain his association with her. He got ten sons from her, and the youngest was named Narayana. He was deeply attached to the youngest son. When he was breathing his last he felt unbearable pang of death and became desperate to save himself. He called out loudly the name of his son Narayana to help him save from dying. This caused wonder. The messengers of the death-deity (*Yama raja*) couldn't touch him because he had uttered Narayana while dying. *Srihari's* messengers had also arrived hearing his desperate utterance of calling out Narayana. They drove away the Yama's messengers. Ajamil got his breath back and he immediately realized the misdeeds he had committed in his life by sacrificing everything for the sake of the pleasure of an indulgent life with a sex-worker. He repented and deserted the association of the woman and went to Haridwar. There he began meditating deeply on the lotus feet of *srihari* on the bank of the Ganges. After sometime, he discarded his mortal remains and was taken to ultimate divine abode of *srihari* from where none comes back to the worldly cycle of birth.

48. Yama's messengers got doubts over the authority of his master (6/3). They enquired from him about the truth. *Yamaraja* illustrated by an example, "The entire creation is like a piece of cloth which is made of threads and those threads are Narayana Himself representing different types of creatures, matter and beings of His creation. He is supreme and His authority is the ultimate. This truth is known to only twelve persons besides him, and they are Narada, Sankadik (group of four under-teen saints), Kapila, Swambhuva Manu, Prahlad, Janak, Bheeshma, Bali (the gem of demons' king), and Shukdeo."

49. Daksha twice produced, each time a group of one thousand sons; the first ones were collectively known as *Haryaswa* and they stuck to meditation and penance on the advice of Narada. They were convinced by Narada's puzzles (with underlined solutions within parentheses) given below that offered them enough clue to renunciation.

- (i) Have you seen the end of the earth? (Ling sarira is the earth); (ii) there is a country which has only one single man (this single man is soul ensnared by the body designated as country, and the body attracts the soul to the worldly affair.); (iii) there is a ditch from where no one can come back (hell in the nether-land doesn't allow the return journey; similarly once initiated to srihari is not allowed return journey to the worldly muck); (iv) there is a woman who bears seven faces (wit); (v) there is a man who is married to this woman (soul); (vi) there is one river which flows both ways: upwards and downwards (maya – delusion causing creation and destruction); (vii) there is a home built of twenty five elements (karmendriya, gyanindriya, mana, ahankar etc.); (viii) there is one *hansa* (royal swan) which has an amazing story (holy scriptures – shastra); (ix) there is one constantly revolving *chakra* made of knives and bolts (time).

50. Daksha was concerned about his sons becoming mendicant on the advice of Narada and they didn't obey his command to procreate. Utterly disgusted, he cursed Narda that he won't find a permanent place for his stay, and would remain a wanderer for his whole life.

51. Daksha produced sixty daughters (**6/6**) from Asikni out of which ten were married to Dharma, thirteen to Kasyap, twenty seven to moon, two to Bhoota, two to Angira, four to Tarchya-kasyap, two to Kuruashaswa. (**Refer 4/1 where Daksha is said to have sixteen daughters from Prasuti, the**

third daughter of Manu which seems to refer to different period of the time).

52. Once in the court of Indra, Brihaspati felt insulted when Indra didn't offer him proper respect. He disappeared and the gods were without any preceptor. The demons were instigated by their preceptor, Shukracharya to charge attack over gods. In absence of the preceptor gods began loosing to demons. On the advice of *Brahma*, Indra appointed Viswarupa as their preceptor. He taught (6/8) Indra, *Narayana-kavacha* (shield). This divine shield has the combined potential of two *mantra* “ॐ नमो नारायणाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय (*aum namo narayanaya + aum namo bhagwate vasudevaya*). Besides the twin *mantra*, this invokes the protection in different period of day and night, at different places, by various forms of *srihari* which He took in several incarnations, viz., *matsya* protects in water, *narsinha* protects in forest. Kesava protects in the morning with *gada* (mace), and so on.

53. Viswarupa's mother was from the demons' family, so he had a soft corner for demons also. While offering his oblations, one part he silently offered in the name of demons. Indra got apprehensive of demons getting stronger by the share of offering of Viswarupa. He cut asunder all the three heads of Viswarupa, and those heads turned into three species of birds. His head which was used for *soma pan* became *papiha* (a type of cuckoo), the one used for *sura pan* became *goraiha* (sparrow), and the one used for food became *titir*. Indra was afflicted by the sin of killing a Brahmin. His sins were shared by earth, water, women and trees. Due to this shared sin, earth possesses desert, water carries muck, women encounter menstrual days, and trees go barren.

54. Viswarupa's father, Twasta was a known personality, and he became angry on the killing of his son. He invoked the fire god and offered oblations to produce the killer of Indra. It is said while offering the oblations the Brahmins

accompanying Twasta had mis-spelt the *mantra* and pronounced which meant “to be killed by Indra”, instead of “killer of Indra” (6/12). Thus came out of the fire, Vritrasura holding a trident. He gradually assumed a large and dreadful dimension and challenged Indra. To eliminate him, Narayana advised gods to pursue Dadhichi for his bones. Dadhichi agreed and his bones were used to make a powerful bolt which Indra used to kill Vritrasura. In the battle field, the vocal duel between Indra and Vritrasura was about the eternity of Narayana which reflected a deep spiritual past life of Vritrasura. The story goes that in his past life he was a king known as Chitraketu. On the advice of Narada and Angira he had accomplished a spiritual power of pleasing *sankarshna* (one of the four emanations of *srihari*: *vasudeva*, *pradyumna*, *anirudha*, and *sankarshna*). Once while hovering around on his plane in the sky he happened to see *shankra* and *parvati* surrounded by saints and sages. He passed a remark against the sitting posture of *parvati* holding close *shankra*. This infuriated her, and she cursed him to be a demon. Consequently he became the demon Vritrasura coming out of the oblation fire of his father, Twasta, but he never lost the memory of *srihari* for he had pleased *sankarshna* by his spiritual penance.

55. Kasyapa had gods and demons from his wives Aditi and Diti. Two mighty demon sons of Diti, Hirnyaksha and Hiranyakshipu were killed by *srihari*. All has happened at the instance of Indra. She wanted to take revenge from Indra. She served hard her husband and pleased him. He wanted to oblige her and he gave words to fulfil her desire. She asked him to bless her with the killer of Indra. Committed Kasyapa had no option. Diti conceived (6/18) and he set a strict code of conduct to observe during the pregnancy stage failing which her desire won't be fulfilled. She followed the directions strictly but once she erred by going to bed with the unwashed

feet. Indra got the chance due to non-observance of her conduct to penalise her. He was serving her in disguise of a Brahmin, and with his subtle form he entered her womb and made seven pieces of the still born mass. On crying each of the seven pieces were further made into seven pieces which made them altogether forty-nine, but they were never killed. Indra was told by them that they were his *marudgana* brothers. Happily Indra left the place with them.

56. Punsvan vrata (6/19) is about the worship of *Lakshmi* and *Narayana*. The worship continues for one full year with due observance of sacredness and pious life, commencing from the first day of bright fortnight of *margashirsha*, and concludes on the last day of the dark fortnight of *margashirsha*.

Prem-parakram skandh

(15 chapters)

(i) The *skandh* is devoted primarily to the legends of Prahlad and incarnation of *nrisinha bhagwan* (the body having upper part of a lion, and the lower part of a human being) .

(ii) The *skandha* begins with Narada dispelling the doubts of Yudhishtira when Shishupal was killed by Srikrishna in his *aswamedha ygya* and awarded His divine abode, eternal salvation.

(iii) Prahlad reveals (7/7) to his fellow students, “When Hirnyakashipu was doing penance at Mandrachala, gods attacked the demons world. Kayadhu, his mother was pregnant carrying him in her womb, she was given a shelter by Narada.”

(iv) Nrisinha incarnates and kills Hirnyakashipu (7/8) . Prahlad is crowned king (7/10)

(v) The balance chapters are on *varnashrma dharma*(7/12-7/15) . and Prahlad once meets Duttatreya (7/12)

57. Parikshit expressed his doubt over the impartiality of *srihari* for He had been found bestowing favour to Indra and killing his opponents. Shukdeo cited an example of similar doubt expressed by Yudhishtira to Narada. It was the occasion of *aswamedha ygya* and Shishupal’s spirit was seen to be merging with Srikrishna when he was beheaded by the *chakra* of Srikrishna. Yudhishtira wanted to know, “Why Shishupal was granted the ultimate emancipation although he always misbehaved with Srikrishna”? Narada explained, “Whether it is with bad intention or good intention, if someone concentrates fully on Him, He bestows the ultimate emancipation. Shishupal and Dantavakra were passing through the last and third birth of the life of a demon under the curse of *sanakadik*. Initially they were known as Jaya and Vijaya, and were in the security of *srihari* at *vaikunthalok*. For holding the entry of *sanakadik* saints to *vaikuntha*, they

incurred the wrath of those sages and were cursed to become demons for three consecutive births. In the first birth in *sat yuga* they were Hirnyaksha and Hirnyakashipu. The former was killed by *varaha bhagwan*, and the latter was killed by *Nrisinha bhagwan*. In the second life in *treta yuga* they became Ravan and Kumbhakarna, and were killed by *sriram*. It was the last birth, so Shishupal and his accompanying friend Dantavakra, both of them were granted ultimate emancipation.”

58. Yudhishtira further wanted to know the details about the killing of Hirnyakashipu. Narada narrated the story that after killing of Hirnyaksha, his brother Hirnyakashipu consoled the wife (of Hirnyaksha named Rushabhanu) and children of his brother and took a vow to settle the score with *srihari*. With a view to attain high potential, he undertook a severe penance (7/3). The potency of penance caused emission of strong brilliance from his meditating body, and that caused the break out of fire in the outside world. Seeing the extraordinary development, Brahma with Bhrigu and Daksha came to bless him. Hirnyakashipu asked three blessings: (i) he should be as powerful as Brahma himself, (ii) He would never be killed by any of the creations of Brahma, (iii) His death should neither be during day nor night; it should be neither on the earth, nor in water, nor in sky; he will not die of any weapon. All his demands were to ensure his immortality forever. Brahma blessed him to be so. Being so blessed, Hirnyakashipu began perpetrating torture over the sages and banned all the *ygya* and religious offerings to *srihari*. So much so that Indra with other gods were driven out of heaven.

59. Hirnyakashipu had three sons, and the youngest one was Prahlad. He appointed two reputed teachers for Prahlad, and they were Shanda and Amarka, sons of the preceptor of the demons, Shukracharya. Once Hirnyakashipu enquired from Prahlad about the lessons he learnt from his teachers. Prahlad

told him about the inherent transitory nature of the worldly life and explained nine salient ways of attaining *srihari* who can only provide the ultimate peace and emancipation. Nine salient ways are called *nawadha bhakti* which comprises of *shrwan* (to listen to His glory), *keertan* (recite His glory), *smaran* (remember Him), *pad sevan* (worship His feet), *archan* (worship Him), *vandan* (pray Him), *dasya* (be subservient to Him), *sakhya* (fond of Him), *atm nivedan* (seek refuge in Him). Hearing that Hirnyakashipu lost his cool and asked explanations from the teachers as to what they were teaching him. He also directed them to take special care of Prahlad and watch whether anybody else comes to teach him.

60. Prahlad returned to the folds of his teachers. They maintained special vigil over him and took all measures including carrots and sticks to mend his ways of learning. Once again Hirnyakashipu got a chance to enquire from Prahlad about his lessons learnt from the teachers. When Prahlad again expressed the supremacy of *srihari*, under great rage, he dashed him heavily over the ground. He asked his courtiers to kill him for he appeared to be supporter of his arch enemy, Vishnu. Hirnyakashipu's all efforts to kill him went in vain. He survived the attacks of any of the sharp weapons, trampling of the elephants, bites of snakes, pushing down from the hill tops etc.

61. His teachers advised Hirnyakashipu to wait for the arrival of Shukracharya who was out of station at that time. Prahlad was put in the fetters of snakes waiting for the arrival of Shukracharya. After coming back, Shukracharya also tried in vain to drive home the point into the mind of Prahlad that *artha*, *dharma* and *kama* were most important aspects of the life. Once again he was sent to the teachers for improvement.

62. Once while his teachers were out, Prahlad addressed all his fellow students (7/6) in the school and emphasised over the necessity of worship of *srihari* who is the only bestower of

ultimate pleasure since all the worldly sources of comfort and luxury are transitory. He quoted that once Narada told him which he had learnt from Nara- Narayan, that *srihari* is very easily attainable provided one offers everything to Him.” The fellow students expressed their surprise how Prahlad came in contact with Narada because since childhood he had never been allowed any chance for such opportunity of meeting Narada. Prahlad revealed, “ My father was engaged in penance at Mandrachala. Indra with other gods plundered our capital and took hostage of my mother, Kayadhu (7/7). My mother was carrying me in her womb. Narada interfered and liberated my mother mentioning that a great devotee of Narayana was in her womb. My mother stayed at Narada’s hermitage until the father returned. Narada used to recite the *bhagawat dharma* which I picked up from the womb. I remember them but my mother hardly remembers anything now.” All the fellow students were convinced that Narayana is both, worldly objective (*swarth*) as well as divine objective (*paramarth*) of a domestic life.

63. On return, the teachers noticed the prevalence of Narada’s following among the students. They intimated the developments to Hirnyakashipu. Hearing that he became upset, and decided to kill Prahalad himself. He asked Prahlad as to where was his Narayana. Prahlad replied about His omnipresence. Hirnyakashipu asked whether He was in the pillar near him also. Prahlad replied in affirmative. Hirnyakashipu struck heavily the pillar and defied that if He was there why didn’t He come out. Lo and behold ! a peculiar large creature with a loud sound came out of the pillar. His upper portion was of a lion with wide open mouth and the lower body was of a human being. He was having thousands of hands with long grown nails. The body was covered with moon-lit white long hair. Eyes were showering fire balls, and

the brilliance around His body caused blindness. It was *nrisinha* incarnation of *srihari*.(7/8)

64. Hirnyakashipu taking that as an illusion of Vishnu attacked over Him. He was such a giant size that Hirnyakashipu looked real dwarf before Him as if a snake was in the clutch of *Garuda*. Initially He allowed Hirnyakashipu to play around but thereafter He took hold of him and putting him in His lap sat at the threshold of the room which was neither outside nor inside the room. Honouring all the boons granted by Brahma to him, He tore off the chest of Hirnyakashipu by his nails when it was the dusk time, neither day nor night. The blood oozed out and marked His body with piebald spots.

65. Seeing Hirnyakashipu killed, other demons attacked over Him. He used all His hands and soon finished all the demons alone. Brahma, Indra, Rudra and other gods appeared in the sky and began showering flowers over Him. They all offered their sincere prayer to Him. His wrath didn't appear to be cooled down. No being could dare go near Him. Even *Lakshmi* was scared for never before she had seen Him in that form. Lastly Prahlad, at the instance of Brahma drew close to Him and prostrated over His feet. He picked him up and blessed him with His hands over his head. Prahlad offered an excellent prayer glorifying His *leela*. On asking for any boon, Prahlad opted for love of dispassionate devotion and nothing else. He granted that and crowned him as king (7/10) for one *manvantar*. He assured Prahlad before leaving that after one *manvantar* he would discard his body and join the assembly closest to Him in *vaikunth*.

66. Narada narrated another story depicting how Shankara was helped once in winning over a demon called Mayadanava. That demon was a great magician and had a tank full of nectar in his possession. He also had three invisible aeroplanes (called *tripur*) made of gold, silver and steel (7/10). He used them to make an attack over gods. The demons who were

killed by gods were given back their life with the use of nectar. Gods approached Shankara for help but he was concerned about the nectar in his possession. Srihari and Brahma helped him. The former became a cow and the latter was a calf. They entered *tripur* and drank the entire nectar from the tank. Thus devoid of nectar, *tripur* was finally destroyed by Shankara which earned him a new name *Tripurari*.

67. Asked about the *sanatan dharma*, Narada mentioned to Yudhishthira, “*sanatan dharma* is devised by *srihari* and it has two main pillars of *varna* (community) and *ashram* (phases in domestic life). *varna* has four divisions: *Brahmins*, *kshatriya*, *vaisya*, *shudra*. Four stages of a domestic life are *brahmcharya*, *garhastha*, *vanaprastha*, and *sanyas*. The role of Brahmins is to lead and enlighten the people in the realm of spiritualism. The necessity of practising *gyan*, *karm* and *bhakti* is fully exemplified by them in their day to day life. They need to sustain their life without any possession nor on beggary. The role of *kshatriya* is to protect the people and collect taxes except from Brahmins for the welfare of the society. *vaisya* is required to perform enterprises and involve in interactivity for the growth of the society. *shudra* is required to serve with diligence the need of the society.

68. Once Prahlad was moving around to watch the welfare of the people of his state. He happened to pass the zone of *Sahya* hills and found Duttatreya lying covered with dust on the bank of the river Kaveri. He enquired from him, “What makes you so healthy although you don’t take food ?” Duttatreya replied that it is hankering (*trishna*) which eats away the vitality of the beings. Once a being becomes free from hankering he will have self pleasure and would possess a healthy state of mind and body.

Kalyan (Gajenda-moksha) skandh

(24 chapters)

(samudra manthan, vamanavtar, matsyavatar)

- (i) The *skandh* is devoted to the legends in brief about other incarnations of Narayana in six *manvantra* preceding the one in which Parikshit happened to meet Shukdeo. Six *manvantra* had elapsed of a given *kalpa* and the seventh was the current one in which Shukdeo narrated to Parikshit the *bhagawatakatha*. In the fourth *manvantra*, He incarnated to liberate Gajendra from the deadly clutches of *grah* (8/3).
- (ii) In fifth Manvantra he incarnated by the name of Vaikuntha and established an excellent divine resort for *Lakshmi* called *vaikunthlok*(8/5).
- (iii) In sixth, his incarnation was as Ajit, who helped churn the ocean for nectar (8/5).
- (iv) When Indra's elephant trampled the garland given by Durvasha, Indra was cursed and he lost his heaven to demons.
- (v) To win back the lost glory, on the advice of Narayana, ocean churning (*samudra-manthan*) was organized as a joint venture of gods and demons. Ten precious items came out of ocean. The last one was nectar which became a bone of contention and Mohini managed to distribute that among gods. Later this caused a break out of war between gods and demons but gods remained victorious.
- (vi) Aftermath of nectar distribution brought up war between demons and gods. Demons were badly demoralized. Bali was killed but his body was revived back to life by Shukrayacharya. He performed *viswajeet ygya*, due to which Bali again won back heaven from Indra and gods were driven out of their celestial homes. Aditi, mother of gods, on the advice of her husband, Kasyapa, observed *payovrata* in the bright fortnight of *phalgun*, and as a result Narayana incarnated as *Vamana* to her. He won back the entire world from Bali as a gift. Lost glory of gods were revived and Bali was made king of *sutala*.
- (vi) *skandh* ends with the legend of *matsyavatar* which had taken place in the last *kalp* of the previous *prardha*.

69. When Parikshit was listening to *bhagawata* from Sukdeo, it was the period of seventh *manvantra* of that *kalp*. **First *manvantra*** was ruled by *swambhuva* Manu when he was blessed with daughters Akuti and Devahuti. Former was blessed with Ygyapurusha who protected *dharma*. The latter was blessed with Kapila. At the fag end Manu and Shatrupa took sever penance and during that period hungry demons to kill them, but they were protected by Ygyapurusha.

70. Second *manvantra* was ruled by Swarochisha Manu who in his later lineage had *Narayana* incarnated as Bibhu and eighty eight thousand saints had become follower of Bibhu.

71. Third *manvantra* had Uttama as Manu. **Fourth *manvantra*** had Tamasa as Manu who was brother of Uttama, Manu of the previous *manvantra*. During this period *Narayana* incarnated to protect *gajendra* against *graha* (8/3). In the previous life *graha* was a *gandharva*, Huhu. He was cursed by Deval. Gajendra was king of *pandya desha* in his previous birth. He was cursed by Agstya. Once the king was deeply engaged in his worship and he couldn't notice the arrival of Agstya. Offended saint cursed him to be an elephant, for he apparently behaved like an arrogant elephant. In the birth of elephant he was called Gajendra, and he stayed at Trikoot, a mountain in the milky ocean (*ksheersagara*). Once, he in a group of elephants went to drink water in a lake. His legs were caught by a crocodile and with the best of his efforts including the efforts of his companion elephants, he couldn't be liberated from the clutches of the crocodile. Seeing no way out to save his life he passionately offered his prayer to *Narayana*. Lord listened to his prayer, and rushed to the site and rescued him by killing the crocodile.

72. Raiwat ruled the **fifth *manvantra***. In his lineage, later, there was an incarnation of *Narayana*, who was known as Vaikuntha. It is Vaikuntha, who established an excellent divine

abode to please his consort *Lakshmi* and this abode was later known as *vaikuntha*, on His name.

73. Sixth *manvaantra* was ruled by Chakshusha. In this period *Narayana* incarnated by the name of Ajit (who transformed Himself to a tortoise and supported *mandrachala*) who helped churn the ocean and produced nectar for the protection of gods. (8/5)

74. Once Durvasha got a flower garland from Narayana as a token of blessings. He offered that garland to Indra who threw that over the head of his elephant mount. The garland was thrown on the ground and trampled by the elephant. Durvasha cursed Indra who lost his fortune of heaven to demons. On fervent prayer of gods and *Brahma* to Narayana, He advised gods to have patience and organized *samudramanthan*. This became a joint venture by gods and demons.

75. The products from *samudramanthan* and their receivers are: (i) *kalkuta* poison (Shiva), (ii) *kamdhenu* cow (saints), (iii) Uchaishrava horse (Bali, demon king), (iv) Airawata elephant (Indra), (v) *kaustubha* diamond (Ajit – *Narayana*), (vi) *kalpavriksha* – celestial tree (gods), (vii) *apsra* – celestial dancers (gods), (viii) *Lakshmi* (*Narayana*), (ix) *varuni* (demons), (x) *amrita* (Mohini managed to distribute among gods 8/9).

76. When *Lakshmi* appeared from the churning, she was given warm reception (8/8)

77. When Mohini managed (8/9) to distribute nectar among gods, demons felt cheated and they charged attack over gods. Eventually, gods won. The dead body of Bali was taken to Shukracharya who helped him revive (8/11). To boost their morale, Shukracharya organized *viswajeeta ygya*. Bali became invincible after this *ygya* and he attacked Amravati, the abode of Indra. Gods were driven out and the heaven fell into the hands of Bali. Aditi, the mother of gods was very upset on the plight of her sons. On advice of Ksyapa, she performed

payovrata (in the bright fortnight of *phalgun*). Consequently, Narayana incarnated as Vamana, and he won over the entire world from Bali in a gift. Bali vacated Amravati and gods were resumed to their lost homes. He was made king of *sutala*. (8/23)

78. Shiva couldn't get chance to see Mohini initially. He enquired Narayana about His Mohini's manifestation. Narayana again redid that and Shiva enchanted by Mohini's beauty ran behind her. He couldn't check his semen falling out (8/12) and the earth got impregnated by gold and silver where ever that semen fell.

79. **Seventh *manvantra*** is ruled by Vaivaswat Manu. Incarnation is as younger brother of Aditya, from the womb of Aditi (wife of Kasyapa). **seventh *manvantra* is the present time.**

80. Coming seven *manvantra* are also described (8/13). **Eighth Manu** is Sawarni. Vamana incarnates in this period and wins the three worlds from Bali in gift. **Ninth Manu** is Dakshinavarni. Narayana incarnates as Rishabha. **Tenth Manu** is Brahmsavarni and incarnation of Narayana is as Viswakshena. **Eleventh Manu** is Dharmasavarni, and Narayana incarnates as Dharmasethu. **Twelfth Manu** is Rudrasavarni and incarnation is as Swadhama. **Thirteenth Manu** is Devasavarni and incarnation is Yogeswara. **Fourteenth Manu** is Indrasavarni and incarnation is of Brihadbhanu to help revive *karma-kanda* (rituals and rites).

81. The *skandha* ends with the legend of *matsyavatar*. There was a king called Satyavrata. His period was previous *kalp* (i.e., last *kalp* of the first *prardha*). In this *prardha*, which is second one, he was born as a son of *viviswan* (son god), called Shradhadeva. He became Manu of the present (seventh) *manvantra* and is called Vaivasvat Manu. In his previous life of Satyavrata he was blessed with the manifestation of Narayana as a fish in his pot when he finished bathing and

came out of a river. His form grew day by day and soon he was to be dropped in ocean by Satyavrata. While being dropped in ocean He had disclosed to Satyavrata that on seventh day a great deluge would submerge the entire landmass. He would come in the form of a boat to rescue him. Fish Narayana was thus incarnated to protect *veda* which was stolen by a demon called Hayagreeva, when *Brahma* was sleeping at the end of the last *kalp* of the first *prardha*.

Rajvansha (Ramavatar) skandh

(24 chapters)

(Chayavan *rishi* - 9/3, Balram marries Revati – 9/3, Ambrisha – 9/4, Bhagirtha – 9/9, Ikshavaku – 9/6, Ram - 9/10, Nimi, Janak – 9/13, Pururava – 9/14, Sahsrarjun, Prashuram – 9/15, Nahusha + Yayati – 9/18, Puru, Dushyanta, Bharat – 9/20, Rantideva – 9/21, Kuru – 9/22, Vasudev – 9/24)

(i) The *skandh* covers the legends of *surya* and *chandra vansh* (dynasty from sun and moon). Later lineage of Chandra *vansh* has two streams from Yayati. Devayani was his legitimate wife, and Sharmishtha was the maid to her. Sons from Devayani form the key lineage of Yadu dynasty, where as the sons from Sharmishtha lead the lineage of Puru dynasty. Kuru dynasty is in the stream of Puru (genesis in Sharmishtha), while Vasudev father of Srikrishna has been in the Yadu's lineage (genesis in Devayani). Vidarbha, and Bhojavansh *yadava* have their genesis also from Devayani.

(ii) The half of the chapters is devoted to the legends about inheritance of Vaivasvat Manu (descendant of Sun) who got among several glorious sons, Ikshvaku from his nostrils is one among them. In the lineage of Ikshvaku is the advent of Ram, an incarnation of Narayana.

(iii) It is the second son of Ikshvaku who is called Nimi, and he got Janaka and Seeta as his descendant. Nimi was cursed by Vasishtha (9/12) to lose his physical body, and thereafter he was granted perpetual invisible form and position by *deva* (gods) over the eye lids of the beings. The physical body of Nimi was churned to revive his inheritance which yielded Janak who was called *Videha* as well as *Mithila*. The former means one who came from the body of someone who discarded his physical form, and the latter means the one who was born from *manthana* (churning). Several rungs down the lineage of Janak was Seeradhwa who got Seeta from tilling of the land. This suggests that Janak has become the title of this dynasty.

(iv) In *Chandra vansha* (*soma vansha*) famous kings were born and its lineage begins from Atri. Pururava, Nahusha, Yayati,

Dushyanta, Bharat, Puru, Kuru, Yadu, Rantidev, Vasudev. Bheeshma from Shantanu, Dhritrashtra, Pandu and others are from the lineage of Puru.

(v) The skandh ends with Vidarbha dynasty who are descendant of Vidarbha in the direct lineage of Yadu.

82. Surya dynasty: The inheritance of Vaivasvat Manu (who is the ruler of the present, and seventh *manvantr*) is from *Brahma* – Marichi – Kasyapa (wife Aditi) – Vivswan (sun god) – Shradhdeva (also called Vaivasvat). For long time he was issueless. On the initiative of Vasishtha, he performed *mitravarun ygya* for child. Her wife wanted a female child, so *hota* recited the *mantra* accordingly and she was blessed with a daughter Ila. The king was not happy and again Vasishtha offered prayer to Narayana for a male child and Ila was transformed into a male child called Sudumn. Once he went into a forest where except Shiva everybody used to turn into a feminine gender. He also with his group turned feminine. Roaming around as a woman (s)he met Budha and subsequently got a child from him called Pururava. On coming back to kingdom, Vasishtha again invoked Shiva and got managed to keep him male for a month, and female in the following month.

83. Later Vaivasvat got ten more children and one of them, Purushdhra was put on the service of cow rendering for Vasishtha. One night when a tiger had attacked the cowherd, he by mistake killed a cow and the tiger escaped partially injured. Vashisth cursed him to become *shudra*.

84. Vaivasvat's another son, Saryati was blessed with a daughter Sukanya. While moving in the forest, she mistook, meditating Chayavan's body as a heap of earth and pricked his eyes with *kusha*. In a compensatory measure of causing blindness to him, she was married to him and stayed with him for his service.

85. In further inheritance of Vaivasvat, a female child was called Revati (father was Anart, whose father was Sharyati). She was married to Balaram on the initiative of *Brahma*.

86. Further in the inheritance, Ambrisha was born to Nabhaga. He was a staunch observer of *ekadashi* (keeping fast on the eleventh day of each fortnight). Once Durvasa arrived at the end of *ekadashi*. On the request of the king he agreed to take his food with him and went out to Ganges for bath. After observing *ekadashi* one always breaks his fast in *dwadashi*. *Dwadashi* was running out and seeing the delay in his coming back, Ambrish broke his fast with *srihari's charnamruta*. When Durvasa came back, he learnt about his breaking of fast, and he became angry. He invoked *kritya* to destroy Ambrisha. Ambrisha stood undisturbed, and *Sudarshnachakra* of *srihari* came forward to protect Ambrisha. *Kritya* was destroyed and *chakra* began chasing Durvasa. He found no refuge and eventually on the advice of *srihari* he came back to Ambrisha and fell on his feet. *Chakra* got calmed down seeing the compassion Ambrisha demonstrated towards Durvasa.

87. Once Vaivasvat *Manu* had a sneeze which yielded a boy from his nostril; this boy was Ikshvaku. Three eldest among his one hundred sons were Vikukshi, Nimi and Dandaka. Sri Ram was the descendant in the lineage of Vikukshi. Later in the inheritance chain, Kakutastha became famous to defeat demons by riding Indra as a bull in the battle field. His initial name was Purnjaya, and since he rode a bull (with a hump called *kakud*) was called Kaukutastha; the bull was Indra in disguise so he was called Indravaha also (9/6). Further down the lineage, Yuvnasva performed a *ygya* for progeny. During *ygya* period, one night he felt thirsty and silently he took the water from the pitcher of the *ygya*. Consequently, he gave birth to a male child who came out tearing his abdomen. The boy was weeping and the male king couldn't give him milk. Indra put his nectar finger in his mouth which helped him survive.

Indra also advised the child not to weep (*ma dhata*), which caused him the name Mandhata.

88. Further down was born Trishanku, Harischandra, Sagar. Mother of Sagar was poisoned by her companions when she carried a child in the womb. Due to blessings of a sage, no harm could reach her and nor to the child. The child was born with poison (*sa + gar*), so called Sagar. He became very famous and when his *ygya-pashu* (horse) was stolen by Indra, his sons dug the entire earth and reached the nether world in search of the horse. The horse was located at the hermitage of saint Kapil and they mistook him as a thief. They found the saint meditating with closed eyes. Their presence caused disturbance at the hermitage and that caused the saint to open his eyes. The moment the irritated saint looked upon them, they were burnt to ashes. Sagar had another wife and her grandson, Anshuman went out to locate the horse. He found his uncles' ash and the horse at the Kapila's *ashrama*. The saint, pleased by his behaviour narrated the story and mentioned that the Ganges water could help emancipate his uncles. The horse was taken back leading to completion of *ygya*. Later, Dilip's son Bhagirtha, grandson of Anshuman, brought the Ganges down the earth and emancipated his grandfathers. His penance had pleased Ganga and she wanted some arrangement to withstand her force while she would dawn on the earth. Bhagirtha by his further penance pleased Shankara who became ready to receive the onslaught of descending Ganga over his head.

89. Further lineage goes like this (9/9): Saudas, Asmak, Mulak, Dasratha, Advid, Viswasaha, Khatwang, Dirghvahu, Raghu, Aj, Dasratha, Ram+Lakshman+Bharat+Shatrughn. Saudas had once gone to forest where he killed a demon. The demon's brother, to take revenge, came in disguise of a cook and pleased Saudas. Once he secretly cooked meat which was served to Vasishtha. The saint detected the meat in food and he

cursed the king, Saudas to become a demon. On prayer of the queen, the saint blessed him to be freed of the demon's life only after twelve years . Saudas knew that he was innocent and he never intended to serve meat to his preceptor. When he was cursed to become demon, he became angry and in retaliation took a resolve with water in his palm to curse Vasishtha for inflicting unreasonable punishment over him. When, on the queen's pleading, the saint yielded, Saudas got calmed down, and he wanted to take back his resolve of cursing his preceptor. With a view to safeguard other beings, he poured the resolved water, which was charged with his potential *mantra*, over his foot and his foot turned black. This caused him his another name *kalmashpad*. While leading the demon's life, he once caught hold of a cohabitating Brahmin couple. He killed and ate the male Brahmin ignoring the pleading of his wife. She cursed him a death if he attempted a cohabitation with his wife. Subsequently at the end of twelve years when he returned home and tried to be with her wife in a compromising posture, she reminded him about the curse of the brahmin's wife. He remained issueless, and later, on the initiative of Vasishtha, his wife carried a child who remained seven years in the mother's womb. It was Vasishtha who hit the belly of his wife with a stone, and thereafter, the child was born. His name was Asmak, which meant one who was hit by a stone. Mulak, the son of Asmak, was the last survivor among *kshatriya* after the elimination spree of *kshatriya* from the earth by Prasuram. He hid himself among women and therefore he was also called Narikavach. Since *kshatriya* clan again resumed from him, he is called Mulak (means origin). In the further lineage, Khatwang was a great warrior who spent his life fighting demons in favor of *deva* (gods). It was only last two *ghati* (forty-eight minutes) of his life that he was reminded by gods about closing end of his life. Knowing that he meditated deeply on *Srihari* and attained salvation.

90. Later Sri Ram had a glorious stint (**9/10, 9/11**) in the same lineage. He killed Ravana to eliminate the fears of saints and sages. Vibhishan was crowned king for a tenure of one *kalp* (one day of *Brahma*, 1000 *chaturyuga*). Four brothers were blessed, each with two sons. Ram had Lav and Kusha; Lakshman had Angad and Chitraketu, Bharata had Taksha and Pushkala; Shatrughna had Subahu and Shrutsena. Ram was so sensitive to the people's comments that once he heard a washer-man chiding his wife and citing the example of Seeta that he was not Ram that he would accept her even if Seeta was under siege with Ravan at Lanka. Ram immediately banished Seeta, and she got a refuge at Valmiki's *ashram*. She was pregnant and she gave birth to two sons at Valmiki *ashram*. Seeta, ultimately offered her sons to the saint and she asked her mother earth to provide refuge to her. The earth split and she entered inside forever. On hearing the departure of Seeta, Ram also renounced his royal life and took *agnihotra* (fire oblation) for thirteen thousand years, and thereafter he left for his divine abode.

91. Nimi was the second son (**9/6, 9/12**) of Ikshvaku. Once he invited Vasishtha for conducting *ygya*. The saint was busy with his prior appointment at Indra's place, so he advised him to defer it until he came back. Nimi couldn't wait, as he was afraid of the transitory nature of life, and he began *ygya* with the help of other *ritwiza* (Brahmin performers). When Vasishtha came back and saw other performers engaged by Nimi, he cursed Nimi to lose his physical form. Nimi upset over his innocence also cursed the saint to lose his body. Both lost their body; Vasishtha was born again from Urvashi and Mitravaruna. Nimi's body was maintained by *ritwiza* until *ygya* was concluded. On the prayer of *ritwiza* the gods pleased and blessed Nimi back with his body. Nimi didn't consent to that and he preferred to live without any physical form. Gods gave him a place over the eyelids. Later, his body was churned

and Janaka (Videha, Mithila) was produced. Several generations down the lineage of Janaka was Seeradhwaja (also called Janak) who got Seeta while tilling the land who was married to Ram.

92. *Chandra* dynasty begins from the saint Atri (9/14). He got Chandrama from his eyes. He was beautiful and *Brahma* made him the ruler of the herbs. He later, abducted Tara, wife of Brihaspati. A grim battle broke out between Chandrama and Brihaspati for Tara. Indra, Shankra and other gods joined from Brihaspati's side, while Shukracharya and demons favoured Chandrama. Ultimately, on the initiative of *Brahma*, Chandrama returned Tara back to Brihaspati. Tara was pregnant and Brihaspati asked her to discard the child prematurely. She obliged him and seeing the brilliance of the discarded child, both Chandrama and Brihaspati again locked their horns. When *Brahma* mediated, Tara consented that the father of the brilliant child was Chandrama. The child was called Budha.

93. Budha was married to Ila and Pururava was born. Urvashi, the celestial dancer was enamoured by his charming personality. They decided to stay together but on the conditions: (i) her two lambs shall be protected by Pururava, (ii) she will take ghee only, (iii) Pururava would never be seen naked except with her in the bed room. Thus her stay with Pururava made her absent from the court of Indra. He sent out messengers to find her. They found her with Pururava and stole her lambs. It was night time and she was lying with Pururava. Hearing the lowing lambs she reminded Pururava for not keeping his words of protecting them. In the impulse of challenge, he ran out with sword to save the lambs. He came back with them, but he was seen naked out of her room running behind the abductors. Urvashi deserted him as her conditions were not kept up. Although later, she continued

meeting Pururava once a year, and they produced several children.

94. Pururava is also responsible for revealing three *veda*, and *arni* for producing fire in *ygya* from the rubbing of two timber elements made of *sami* (one of the auspicious trees).

95. Down the rungs of lineage was Jahnu who wholly swallowed the river Ganga. Later, Gadhi was born who got a beautiful daughter called Satyavati. A saint, Richika (**9/15**), wanted to marry her. The saint appeared a mismatch for her, and therefore the parents put a condition to the saint to bring one thousand white horses having one ear black to each of them. The saint managed the horses from Varuna and married Satyavati. Once Satyavati and her mother both prayed the saint for child. The saint prepared *charu* (sweetened milk and rice) separately for them. Satyavati's mother exchanged the *charu* with her daughter. The saint told his wife, Satyavati, that she would be blessed with a son very strict disciplinarian famous for punishing others, and her mother would get a *bramha-vadi* (knower of god) son. On the potential of the saint the advent of Satyavati's son was delayed for a long time. She got a child called Jamdagni. Satyavati herself, later turned into a river called Kaushaki⁶.

96. Gadhi had a son, Viswamitra (**9/16**) whose reputation is known for attaining Brahmin's status in his life although by birth he was a *kshatriya*. Thus Kaushaki was his sister. He had one hundred sons, and among them the fiftieth son, Madhuchanda was dearer to him. His all other sons were popularly known by a common name of Madhuchanda. Once he adopted the son of his sister in his family fold and asked his sons to treat him as his eldest brother. Madhuchanda and younger fifty sons obliged him but the elder forty-nine didn't

⁶ Present day *koshi nadi* in Nepal and Bihar

agree. He cursed them to become *maleksha*. His lineage later became known in *kaushik gotra*.

97. Jamdagni, son of Satyavati, was married to Renuka, the daughter of a saint and he got the eldest son called Vasuman; the youngest was Prashuram. It is said Prashuram was an incarnation to liberate the earth from the misdeeds of *kshatriya* who had resorted to *tamoguni* (indulgent) life. His contemporary was Sahsrarjun who was a mighty *kshatriya* king of Haihaya dynasty of Mahismatipuri. Being a yogic practioner, he (Sahsrarjun) was blessed by *bhagwan* Duttatreya and had got one thousand hands which were able to access any place he liked by an automatic extension. Once he was enjoying the water game in Narmada river and his hands raised a bund to store water so that he could enjoy the pool of water. Ravana, the great demon king happened to be near that place on upstream and his camp was submerged due to the bund of Sahsrarjun hands. He got angry and rushed to Sahsrarjun to settle the score. Sahsrarjun, like a magician's feat, extended his hands to him, and lifted him bodily like a kid's toy. Ravana was humiliated and became a captive over his palms; later he was released by the intervention of his grandfather Pulstyā.

98. Once Sahasrarjun (9/15) happened to pass by the hermitage of Jamdagni, and he took away the celestial cow (*kamdhenu gaay*) by force to his capital. Prashuram was out at that time and when he came back he stormed his way to Mahismatipuri, and after killing the king and his forces liberated the cow. Jamdagni was not happy over the killing of the king by his son Prashuram. He advised him to inculcate the *brahminic* traits of tolerance, and for that he was instructed to go to several pilgrimage places as a measure of repentance of killing the sovereign king which was severer sin than killing a Brahmin. Prashuram obeyed his father's command and after completing his pilgrimage to several places he came back after one year.

99. Once his mother (9/16) Renuka had gone to fetch water from the nearby river for the purpose of daily worship of her husband. She was delayed in watching the water-game of a *gandharva* and a group of beautiful women, while she was on way to the river. On her arrival back with water, Jamdagni could read her mind engaged in a game with another man. He got angry and called out his sons to kill her. No one turned up, but Prashuram obliged his father by killing his mother as well as his brothers. Jamdagni was pleased with him. On his asking for a boon for obeying him, Prashuram got revived his mother and brothers with a state of mind carrying no previous impression of the killing.

100. Chandra Dynasty (Yadu dynasty from Devayani): Grand son of Pururava, named Nahusha (9/18) was a famous king. He was dethroned because of his immoral character to grab Indra's wife. His son Yayati was made the king. Once while coming back from the forest Yayati felt thirsty. He saw a well and when he tried to take water from the well, he noticed a naked girl inside the well. He helped her come out of the well. The girl was Devayani, daughter of Shukracharya. She and her girl friend Dharmishtha (daughter of Vrishaparva, a demon king) were dragged into a personal conflict on the issue of exchange of dress. Both along with their other girl friends were together bathing naked in a tank. Seeing Shiva and Parvati passing that way they hurried out of the tank and by mistake Dharmishtha put on the Devayani's dress. Latter took this seriously and both fought on this issue. Dharmishtha prevailed upon her, and she stripped her naked and under impulsive anger pushed her inside that well. After narrating this incidence, Devayani proposed to marry Yayati. He agreed, although he had initial hesitation for she was a *brahmin* and he was a *kshatriya*. A story goes that Kach, the son of Bruhashapati (gods' preceptor), was student (in disguise) of Shukracharya to earn the potential of dealing *mrutasanjivani*

(the art to revive the dead). When, on completion of his course, he was leaving, Devayani the daughter of Shukracharya proposed to marry him. Kach denied this relation, because he considered the child of his *guru* as his sister, because a disciple is also considered as child of *guru*. Devayani, in disgust cursed him that he would lose the potential he earned from his *guru*. In retaliation, Kach also cursed her that no Brahmin would ever accept her as consort.

101. When Shukracharya knew about the incident of Sharmishtha misbehaving with Devayani, he threatened Vrishparva (Sharmishtha's father) to desert him. The issue was settled when Dharmishtha was offered as a maid servant to Devayani on the condition that she would never indulge with Yayati to produce children. Yayati married Devayani and Dharmishtha used to serve them as a maid. He was blessed with two sons from Devayani, among them Yadu was the elder, and the younger was Turvasu. Stealthily, when Devayani used to pass through menstrual courses, Yayati cohabitated with Sharmishtha and produced three sons from her: Druhu, Anu and Puru (9/18). The truth of Dharmishtha's getting sons from Yayati was revealed later to Shukracharya by Devayani and he cursed Yayati to lose his youth and become old and ugly. On great persuasion of Yayati and Devayani, the curse was relaxed, "if anybody offered him his youth he can regain his initial youthfulness." Yayati tried with his elder sons (Yadu and others) but nobody obliged. His youngest son Puru (from Dharmishtha) could help him and both exchanged their physical condition. Yayati further enjoyed his indulgence with Devayani for long. Once he realized (9/19) the futility of unending indulgence, and he decided to renounce the kingly outfit in favour of Puru, the youngest son from Sharmishtha. Puru became the sovereign but his younger brothers were given the divisional lordship, i.e., Devayani's sons Yadu of the south, Turvasu of the west; and Sharmishtha's sons, Druhu of

the south-east, Anu of the north. He returned the youthfulness to his son, Puru which he had borrowed from him, and he himself along with Devayani attained salvation with due meditation on *Srihari*.

102. Down the lineage of first son of Yadu, called Sahashrajeet, were born great kings (9/23) viz., Arjun (Kritavirya Arjun also called Sahshrarjun; he was son of Kritavirya so he was first called Kritavirya Arjun). He pleased Duttatreya and got in boon tremendous yogic potential. It is said if someone had lost valuables that would be retrieved by simply remembering Sahashrarjun's name. Among his one thousand sons only five could survive and all others were killed by Prashuram.

103. Madhu and Vrishni down the lineage lead the important community of Yadava, i.e., Madhava, Varshneya and Yadava are after the names of Madhu, Vrishni and Yadu.

104. Srikrishna's father, Vasudev (9/24) was born from Shur (also called Shursen and he was in the lineage of Vrishni) and his wife Marisha. He had ten brothers. It is said when he was born the musical instruments in the heaven produced music on their own. Therefore his another name is *Anakdundubhi*. Shursen had a friend Kuntibhoja who had no issue. Shursen gave his eldest daughter Prutha to him in gift who remained with him as an adopted child. She, later, learnt from Durvasa to invoke gods. Once on a trial basis she invoked Sun god. He gave her a son, who became famous as Karna. Since she was not married, she discarded the child in a casket in flowing Ganges water. He was subsequently picked up from water and brought up by Adhiratha in the lineage of Rompada (in the stream of Anga 9/23 from the Sharmishtha's family tree)

105. Vasudev produced several sons from several wives. Rohini gave him Balram, and Devaki was blessed with eight children, Srikrishna is the youngest and most famous among

several incarnations of Narayana. Subhadra was the daughter of Devaki.

106. Vidarbha dynasty (9/24) is after the name of the illustrious king Vidarbha who hailed in the lineage of second son of Yadu, named Kroshta. Shishupal was in the same lineage and he was called Chediraj because he was born from Chedi down the family rungs of Vidarbha. Further down this lineage was born Satvat whose one of the seven sons was Mahabhoja, a great king, and after his name the subsequent inheritance is called *Bhojavanshi yadava*.

107. Chandra dynasty (Puru Dynasty from Dharmishtha) : As stated earlier, Dharmishtha also pleased Yayati and secretly got three sons from him. Among them Puru, the youngest, became the forefather of the upcoming dynasty lead by Dushyant and Bharat.

108. Down the Puru's lineage was born Dushyanta. He was enamored by the beauty of Shakuntala when he met her at the hermitage of the saint Kanva. Shakuntala was born from Rambha, a celestial dancer and Viswamitra. The child was discarded in the forest and Kanva *rishi* brought her up. Both Dushyanta and Shakuntala got married and they produced Bharat who became very reputed king, on whose name the country of present India has been named as *Bharatvarsha*. He performed one hundred thirty-three *aswamedha ygya* (9/20) from *gangotri* to *gangasagar* (55 numbers) , and from *yamunotri* to *pryag* (78 numbers).

109. Bharat was married to three daughters of the king of Vidarbha and was blessed with sons. He was not sure about their capability. On his doubtful remarks the queens chose to kill their sons. Later, after performing one *ygya* Marudgana gave him a child called Bhardwaja who lead the lineage further. Actually the child was born to Mamata, the wife of brother of Bruhspati. She (Mamata) was pregnant and

Bruhaspati wanted to have sex with her. Despite being warned by the child in the womb, he forced her for sex. She carried in her womb another child from Bruhaspati also. Since carried (*bhara*) by mother and seeded from two (*dwaja*), he was called Bhardwaja (his second name was Vitath also). The child was discarded in dispute, but Marudgana took care of the child and it was this child who was offered to Bharat by Marudgana as a gift in return of performing *marutstoma ygya*.

110. Further was born in the lineage (9/21), Rantideva. He is known for his sacrifices. He used to take food served to him without any asking. Once he couldn't take food for forty-eight days. When he got some food on the forty-ninth day, he got guests asking for the food. He went on sharing with the coming guests one after another. At the end, when he tried to take the left over water only, that was also sought by a visiting guest. Pleased by his sacrifices, Narayana appeared and blessed him the ultimate peace and concentration which he was looking for as his ultimate objective. He was such a gentle and sacrificing soul that he never desired ultimate salvation rather he longed for enhancement of his personal capability so much so that he could happily bear the sufferings and pains of the others.

111. Down the lineage Hasti (9/21) was born who established Hastinapur. He had three sons and the eldest Ajmeedha produced *Brahmins* also. Kuru (9/22) was born from the grandson of the second son of Ajmeedha, who was married to Tapti, the daughter of Sun. Kuru established Kurukshetra. In continuation of the heritage, **Kritwi became the bride of this dynasty. Kritwi was the daughter of Shukdeo (who narrated *bhaagawata* to Parikshit).** When Shukdeo renounced home, he left his shadow (called his daughter Kritwi) to look after the arrangements at the home. She produced great *tatvavadi* in the family. **This chapter**

carries story of producing *Brahmins* in the family of *kshatriya*.

112. Jarasandha was born in the lineage of Ajmeedha (9/22) and he was born in two parts but was joined together by Jara, a magician female demon.

113. In the coming generations of the second son of Hasti known as Dwimeedha, were five sons collectively called *panchal*, and they were: Mudgal, Yavanir, Bruhadishu, Kampilya and Sanjay. Mudal, the eldest amongn them had become Brahmin. He had twin children, the son was Divodas, and the daughter was Ahilaya. The latter was married to the sage, Gautam who produced Shatanand, and in the third generation of Shatanand was born a great archer, Sharadwan, who once had an involuntary emission of his semen after having a look at Urvashi. The emission fell on the *munj* grass and a pair of male and female child was born. They were brought up on compassion by Shantanu who happened to find them lying desolated in the wild bush of *munj* grass. The male child was Kripacharya, and the female child was Kripi who was later married to Dronacharya.

114. In the lineage of Divodas of *panchal* dynasty Drupada and Draupadi were born. In the parallel heritage originating from Jahnu (the second son of Ajmeedha who was the eldest son of Hasti) were Shantanu and Bheeshma (9/22). Bheeshma was born from the womb of Ganga. The second wife of Shantanu was the daughter of Dashraja who produced Chitrangada and Vichitrivirya.

115. It is said Shantanu had a mircalous power of turning an old into young by simple touch of his hand and this has caused him this name since it dawned peace (*shanti*) on those who were transformed young from old. His elder brother, Devapi had sacrificed kingdom in his favour. It is said Devapi is engaged in meditation in *Kalapgram* even today, and he would

be credited to revive the lost inheritance of *Chandra* dynasty when *satyuga* commences after the end of *kaliyuga*.

116. Another daughter of Dashraja called Satyavati was married to Parasara who gave birth to **Srikrishna Dwaimpayana Vyas**.

117. The second son of Shantanu, Vichitrvirya was married to Ambika and Ambalika. Vichitrvirya died issueless and Vyas produced from his two wives Dhritarashtra and Pandu. Vidura was also born from a maid by an effort of Vyas.

118. Dhritarashtra was married to Gandhari and had one hundred sons together called *kaurav*, the eldest being Duryodhana. Duhshla was the lone sister of *kaurav*.

119. Pandu was married to Kunti and Madri but couldn't produce any child under fear of a curse. Kunti invoked gods and got Yudhishtira from Dharma, Bheem from Vayu, and Arjun from Indra. Madri could get two sons Nakula and Sahdev by invoking Aswinikumar (the celestial physician).

120. Draupadi, daughter of Drupad was married to *pandav* and gave five sons (9/22) to them. Her sons were Prativindhya from Yudhishtira, Shrutsen from Bheem, Shrutakirti from Arjun, Shatanika from Nakul, and Shrutikirti from Sahdeo. Besides, Yudhishtira had Devak from his another wife named Pauravai; Bheem had Ghatochak from Hidimba, and Sarvgat from Kali; Arjun had Eravan from Ulipi (*Nagvansha* bride), and Babhrubahan from his wife from Manipur. Sahdeo had a son Suhotra from Vijaya; Nakul had a son Naramitra from Keranumati.

121. From Arjun and Subhadra was born Abhimanyu. Uttara, wife of Abhimanyu produced Parikshit. Janmejaya was the eldest among four sons (other three: Shrutsen, Bhimsen, Ugrasen) of Parikshit and Janmejaya's son Shatanika, proved a great *tatvavadin* (accomplished scholar).

122. In the lineage of Anu, the eldest of Sharmishtha's sons, were Ang, Vang, Kaling, Suhya and Aandhra who established

six independent states in the east on their own names. In the immediate lineage of Ang was born a great king Rompad who was a close friend of Dasaratha (father of Ram in the *suryavansha*). Rompad had another name Chitraratha and he was issueless. He was gifted by Dasaratha his own daughter Shanta. She was married to Reishyshringa, a great saint born from the womb of a doe and a saint called Vibhandaka. Once when a severe famine stalked Rompad's kingdom, he brought Rishyashringa with the help of female dancers and musicians and it was his presence that fetched rains. Later, Rompad and Dasaratha, both the friends were blessed by sons due to sacrificial (*yagya*) oblations of Rishyashringa.

Leela (Srikrishnavatar) skandh
(49 +51 = 90 chapters)

- (i) Dwapar was in the concluding quarter to give way to the advent of Kaliyuga. The *skandh* begins with the misery of the mother Earth which has culminated to the rampant rise of demonic activities. She narrates her misery to *Brahma* in presence of other gods. They together offer a passionate prayer to *srihari*. At the end of the prayer *Brahma* went into deep meditation, and *srihari* appeared in his vision. He indicated that he would appear to mitigate the miseries of the mother Earth. His advent would be in *yaduvansh*.
- (ii) *skandh* 10/3 mentions about His advent, but it is only in *skandh* 10/11 that his natal star, *rohini* is mentioned.
- (iii) *skandh* 10/13 and 10/15 show that when He was five He was allowed to graze calves only, and when He became six he was permitted to graze cows.
- (iv) *skandh* 10/20 dwells upon the natural mechanism of advent of rains. It is evapo-transpiration which causes rains. During four months of a year rains cause closure of all the educational institutions. Social and commercial activities are suspended as well during this period.
- (v) Srikrishna praised the lives of the trees (10/22) which is meant for the benefits of the others.
- (vi) The legend of *Ygyapatni* of 10/23 is now identified as *bhatraur biharijee* near vrindavan, which is about 2 km on its outskirts towards Mathura. The place is near *dwarkadhish bageecha* and is located on a very high earth mass accessible by a stair way having about 75 risers. By *bhatraur* is meant *bhat* (boiled rice) offered to *biharijee*.
- (vii) The reference of *skandh* 10/31 is revealing. *Lakshmi*, divine consort of Narayana, also resided quietly, in *vrajbhumi* and witnessed as well as enjoyed His pastimes. 10/47 also refers to *lakshami*. The venue of *maharas* is also mentioned in 10/47 quoting that *lakshmi* was not given any special importance during that dancing spree.

(viii) Dwarka established in the length and breadth of 153 km was located deep inside the western coast where Mathura's natives were rehabilitated.

(ix) Romharshan Suta was a low cast person (10/78) but by virtue of his upright style of life and learning he was appointed chairperson by all the Brahmins who used to periodically gather at Naimisharnya with an objective to solve several spiritual riddles and issues.

(x) In 10/79 special mention is made about the sacred rivers, places including *Venkatachala*, the famous shrine of *Balajee*. This suggests the eternal presence of *Balajee* over the earth. *Anantsayan* at Thiruanantpuram of Kerala, and *Srirangam* at Tirichy of Tamil Nadu are also mentioned.

123. *Dwapar* was in the concluding quarter to give way to the advent of *Kaliyuga*. The *skandh* begins with the misery of the mother Earth which has culminated to the rampant rise of demonic activities. She narrated here misery to *Brahma* in presence of other gods. They together offered a passionate prayer to *srihari*. At the end of the prayer *Brahma* went into deep meditation, and *srihari* appeared in his vision. He indicated that he would appear to mitigate the miseries of the mother Earth. His advent would be in *yaduvansha*. *Brahma* advised other gods to go to the earth in several manifestations to help Him perform His wishes.

124. Mathura was the capital of *yadu* dynasty since Shursen. The marriage of Devaki and Vasudev was solemnized with great celebrations at Devak's place (father of Devaki). On the occasion of the farewell after the marriage, Kans, the son of Ugrasena who was the king of Mathura, was driving the chariot carrying the bridal couple. On way he heard a celestial voice warning Kans that the eighth child of Devaki would kill him. Kans wanted to kill Devaki immediately but persuaded by Vasudev he spared her on his promise that all the children would be handed over to Kans immediately after the birth.

Subsequently, the first child of Devaki named Kirtiman, was brought to Kans by Vasudev. Kans spared the life of the child.

125. In the meanwhile Narada (10/1) visited Kans's place and convinced him about the presence of gods in disguise of Devaki, Vasudev and others over the *vraj* land. Their objective is to liberate the earth from the demonic activities. Kans immediately put Devaki and Vasudev into prison and grabbed the reign of the state by dethroning his father Ugrasen. He apprehended that Vishnu's advent was imminent since his previous life of Kalnemi when he was killed by Him, he nourished enmity against Him. He began killing the children of Devaki immediately after the birth; first six⁷ (9/24) killed by him were **Kirtiman, Sushen, Bhadrasen, Riju, Sammardan, and Bhadra**. When it was the time of the seventh child (10/2), on the inspiration of *srihari*, the child was extracted from Devaki's womb by His *yogmaya* and installed in the womb of Rohini, another wife of Vasudev who resided with Nand in Gokul. Consequently, Rohini delivered the child known as Balaram. He was incarnation of *sheshajee* and is also called *sankarshan* (which means one who is extracted). In *ramavatar* he was Lakshman, the younger brother of Ram. This time he came as an elder brother.

126. Kans knew that it was miscarriage of the seventh child, and he became strictly vigilant awaiting the advent of the eighth child. In the meanwhile, *Yogmaya* was directed by *srihari* to appear in the womb of Yashoda, wife of Nand in Gokul. *Srihari* Himself appeared in the womb of Devaki and gave a divine glimpse to Vasudev. *Brahma* and other gods

⁷ In Skandh 10/85 it is mentioned that celestial couple Marichi and Ur na had six sons. When Brahma developed lust against his own creation, Sarswati, they had ridiculed him for doing so. Brahma cursed them to become demons. First they became sons of Hirnyakashipu, later *yogmaya* put them in the womb of Devaki and their names were different (compared to 9/24): **Smar, Udageetha, Parishwang, Patanga, Kshudrabhruta, Ghruni**.

visited Him in the prison and offered their prayer for His kindness to come over the earth.

127. *Srihari* appeared in his divine form with four hands all equipped with His insignia (*chakra, sankha, gada, padma*). Vasudeva and Devaki offered their prayer. *Srihari* revealed, “In one of the previous births, Devaki was Prusni, and Vasudev was Sutapa *prajapati*. Because of your severe penance I came as Prusnigarbha since you wanted a son like me. Later, when Devaki was Aditi, and Vasudeva was Kasyap, I came as Upendra also known as Vaman. Now, third time, I am again your son.” Both of them prayed Him to hide His identity and accordingly He became a newly born infant. Vasudev, under divine inspiration, took him in his hands and came to the locked gate. It was midnight, but his cell gate opened up automatically. He continued moving forward. He crossed Yamuna which was in flood. He reached Gokula and saw Yashoda lying unconscious after delivering a female child. He picked up that child and kept his child in her place and came back to prison in Mathura. When he entered his cell all doors got locked themselves. Hearing the cry of the nascent child Kans came running getting information from his guards. Devaki pleaded, “This being a female child could never be your killer. Moreover, you killed all my previous sons, my female child could be spared.” Kans didn’t listen and dashed the child against a rock. The child being *Yog-maya* herself, transformed in her real divine form of eight hands all equipped with the divine insignia and instead of being dashed over to the rock went up in the sky; she revealed to Kans that his killer was born elsewhere and disappeared. This *Yog-maya* is now worshipped on the earth as goddess known by different names at different places **(10/2)**, viz., Ambika, Sharda, Vindhyavasini, Bhadrakali, Narayani, Vashnavi, Ishani, Vijaya, Madhavi, Kumuda, etc.

128. Ashamed Kans apologized with Devaki and Vasudev and freed them from the fetters of the prison. His ministers advised Kans to kill all the newly born children in the area. The killing spree was made operational with immediate effect. Gokula was busy in celebrating the birth of the first child to Nand as since then, although he was in advanced age, was issueless. This child was no less than *srihari*, and came to be later known as Srikirshna.

Srikrishna bal-leela (pastime of His childhood)

129. Putana was a dreadful female demon (10/6). In Gokul she entered the house of Nand in disguise of a beautiful woman. In presence of Rohini and Yashoda she picked up the child in her lap and gave her poisonous breast in His mouth and went up in the sky. The child Srikrishna sucked her life through her breast and she fell dead over the ground with Srikrishna playing over her chest. He was picked up by other women and prohibitive rituals were performed to ward off the future evil incident.

Utkach, son of Hirnyaksh was cursed by Lomash *rishi* to lose his body since he was in the habit of wantonly damaging and destroying trees (10/7). On his sincere prayer, the sage under compassion, predicted his liberation by the touch of the holy feet of Srikrishna. This demon transformed as a wooden cart got a position in the courtyard of Nand. Srikrishna as a child had begun taking side turns. Such movement of the child being a happy indicator of health, was being celebrated in the presence of a large number of guests. The child Srikrishna was made to lie under the shade of the cart while the cart was made a store of milk products being collected to honour the guests. Srikrishna got up from His sleep and began moving vigourously his legs which hit the cart and the cart was thrown

tumbling up and down. This emancipated the demon and this incident is known as *shakat-bhanjan*.

130. **Trunavart** was another (10/7) demon and close friend of Kans. He was king of *pandu-desh* in his previous birth. Once he was enjoying the river bank with his wife and didn't give recognition to passing Durvasha. The sage cursed him to become a demon. One day Srikrishna was in the lap of His mother but she felt Him too heavy to hold in her hands. She put him on ground. Immediately after that a heavy storm lashed Gokul and the child Srikrishna lying on the ground was picked up in the sky. It was due to the evil deed of Trunavart. Child Srikrishna increased his weight and Trunavart in the form of a heavy storm couldn't hold him up in the sky. Srikrishna also gagged his throat causing him to drop down dead. The moment Trunavart was killed the storm was over. Women picked Him up and performed several rituals to ensure His forthcoming days free from impending troubles.

131. Once Srikrishna was sucking milk from His mother Yashoda's breast (10/7). His mouth was full and the milk overflowed over His cheeks. Yashoda, in fit of curiosity, opened His mouth to see the quantity of milk therein. Lo and behold ! she saw the **entire cosmos inside**. She couldn't bear the scene and shut her eyes.

132. Once, Gargacharya, the *guru* of Nand visited Gokul (10/8). Nand requested him to fix the auspicious time to organize the **naming** ceremony of both the children, one from Rohini and the other from Yashoda. Gargacharya forbade Nand to openly organize the naming ceremony with a view to keep the children away from the attention of Kans. He took both the children inside a cowshed and designated the handsome looking son of Rohini as *Ram* and since he was bony and stocky he added *bal* also and called Him **Balram**. The child of Yashoda was of dark complexion so he called Him **Srikrishna**.

133. Every month of His growing was adding notoriety in the name of Srikrishna. He used to steal pots of butter and sweat curd from neighbouring houses, and break them after eating. His friends lend all help to Him in such accomplishments. A complain was once brought to the attention of Yashoda about Him of **chewing clay (10/8)**. She forced open His mouth. She was bewildered to see again the **cosmos inside**. She could see herself also therein at *vrajbhumi*. Bewildered Yashoda, began praying Him, and she was soon restored to her normal state of mind.

134. Yashoda had such a great affection for Him that seeing Him her breasts used to automatically drop milk **(10/9)** drenching her upper garments. Once on such a development she picked Him up and gave her breast in His mouth. He was sucking milk, and in the meanwhile she could see the boiling milk spilling over the fire. Putting Him down she went to save the milk. Srikrishna got angry by the interruption to His milk feeding. He sneaked to the corner where the pots full of milk products were stored. In search of fresh ones he began destroying and sharing with the monkeys the pots which contained the previous days' old products. Seeing His notoriety, Yashoda rushed to Him with a baton in her hand. He was a great dramatic actor since childhood. Seeing a baton in her hand, He began pretending as if He was weeping. His hands rubbed the eyelids over the eyeballs. The *kajal* was smeared around His dimple cheeks. Yashoda enamoured by His handsome face spared the rod but thought of punishing Him by tying Him to a wooden mortar which He used as a tool to access the hanging pots of butter from the ceiling. She brought a rope to tie Him around the mortar, but it fell short a little. She tried several extensions but all went short. She was upset, and seeing her frustrated, He got tied.

135. In the courtyard, there was a pair of arjun tree called *yamlarjun (10/10)*. Srikrishna tied with the mortar crawled

towards the trees. There was a small space between the two trees through which He managed to pass his body but the mortar getting oblique got stuck. When He tried to pull forward the mortar also, the trees fell down. Two brilliant souls came out of the trees and before dispersing they offered a sincere prayer to Him for their emancipation. They were known as Nalkuvar and Manigreev, two sons of Kuber (the celestial treasury officer). They had ignored once the presence of Narada when they were enjoying their private life with their wives on the bank of Mandikini at Kailash. Their wives noticed Naarada coming and the women put on their cloths but they didn't care. This worked up Narada and he cursed them to become inert trees on the earth. He however also predicted their emancipation by Srikrishna sometime later when He would incarnate on the earth.

136. Experiencing rise in evils at Gokula, Nand with other *gop* shifted their habitation along with their cowherd to *vrindavan* (10/11). One day when it was *rohini nakshatra*, the natal star of Srikrishna, both the brothers were dressed up in new cloths and a festivity was celebrated at *vrindavan*.

137. Now Srikrishna along with Balrama was able to go to the forest for cow grazing. Once a demon (called *vatsasur*) disguised as a calf merged in the grazing herd (10/11). Srikrishna realized this and He took the calf by his rear legs and lifting up gave a round in the air. The demon was dead.

138. Once *vakasur* another demon and great friend of Kans, disguised as a white crane (10/11) with long beaks came to Srikrishna when He was taking water from a nearby pond in the grazing forest. The bird could grab Him and swallowed down his throats. Soon, the bird vomited Him out and tried to attack Him with his sharp beaks. Srikrishna held the beaks and pulled them apart until it reached his throat. The demon was dead.

139. An interesting incidence (10/12-10/14) is associated with the killing of *aghasur*, another demon who happened to be younger brother of *putana* and *vakasur*. Srikrishna was five and He was allowed to graze only calves in the forest. The herd of cows were taken separately by elders and youngsters were allowed to graze only the calves in a separate herd. The news of killing of *aghasur* reached the *gop* in *vrindavan* after one year. The delay was caused by *Brahma*, who in the intervening period had stolen away the calves and the young *gop* accompanying Srikrishna in the forest. *Aghasur* had assumed a form of huge python with open mouth. The boys in the grazing forest were mistaken by the peculiar site made of a huge rock cave. They under curiosity entered the opened mouth of the python. Srikrishna had sensed the rat and when he was entering, the demon wanted to close his mouth and grind Him under his teeth. Srikrishna assumed a large form and the snake couldn't close the mouth and died gasping for breathing. The boys who had entered the belly had died, but they were salvaged by Srikrishna. The demon after the death, had assumed a brilliant form and merged into the body of Srikrishna. This was noticed by gods in heaven. They celebrated the occasion and showered flowers over Srikrishna. Somehow, this glorification to Srikrishna was not relished by *Brahma*. He came to the earth to test His divinity.

140. At that time after the death of *aghasur*, all the boys and Srikrishna were taking lunch over the flat sandy bank of Yamuna river. *Brahma* took away the grazing calves and hid them inside a cave. Boys, while taking lunch, could realize the missing calves. Srikrishna assured them and advised them to continue taking lunch and He would see the calves. Srikrishna with hands spotted with rice and curd moved around in vain to locate the calves. While coming back to the river side, where He had left the boys taking lunch, He found them also missing. Then He realized that *Brahma* was behind all the

developments. He immediately transformed Himself into calves and boys. They all went back at sunset time to *vrindavan*. No body in *vrindvan* could realize the difference between their own sons and calves and the new ones created by Srikrishna Himself. Every belonging was Srikrishna. All the rings around the neck of the calves, the decorative pieces over the heads of the calves, the upper and lower garments of the boys, every thing possessed by calves and boys were Srikrishna Himself. The mothers (animals and human beings - both cows and *gopi*) had an enhanced affection to their sons (Srikrishna in disguise). The days passed by but nobody could realize the truth. One day it so happened that the cows could see the calves in the forest from a distant place and they came running to their calves as if some magnetic force was working between them. Balram could realize the extra ordinary situation. He meditated and came to reveal the truth (10/13) that every calf and boy were Srikrishna Himself. He enquired about the incident from Srikrishna. He narrated the entire deeds of *Brahma* to Balram. In the meanwhile, *Brahma* came to the earth to see the further development and by this way one year had passed. To his utmost surprise, calves and boys were sleeping in the cave as he had put them, but the same number of identical calves and boys were in the forest also. He couldn't bear the scene and time and again he tried to confirm the reality by coming to the cave and to the group of calves and boys in the grazing forest. He could then had a vision of srikrishna in His divine form with four hands decorated with insignia of *chakra*, *sankha*, *gada* and *padma*. He could also see that Srikrishna was still with hands having trace of rice and curd as if he was taking lunch with the boys. All this put him in great confusion, and finally, he prostrated over the feet of Srikrishna realizing His ultimate divinity. He restored back the scene of one year back: calves grazing and Srikrishna coming back to the boys with trace of rice and curd over his hand.

None of the boys could know about the entire incidence and nor realize that one year had passed. They went back home in the evening and narrated (10/14) the story of killing of *aghasur* a deadly huge python by Srikrishna.

141. When He turned six (10/15), he was allowed to graze cows. One day on the request of His friends, Sridama, Stokakrishna and Saubala he went with Balram to the palm grove protected closely by a demon called *Dhenukasur*. The demon was in the form of an ass. Balrama killed the demon by lifting him by his rear legs and dashing against one of the palm trees. Earlier, ripe and tasty palms were not accessible to anybody but after the killing of the demon, the palms became freely available to everybody.

142. Kaliya was a deadly serpent (10/16-17) residing in the deepest pool of the Yamuna river near *vrindavan*. Earlier he used to stay at *ramanak dweep*, the inhabiting island of snakes. His mother Kadru, and the mother of Garuda, Vinita were having bitter relations. Consequently Garuda used to perform wanton killing of snakes. *Brahma*, in order to save the species, set a rule that one snake would be offered to Garuda at the end of every dark fortnight. Kaliya defied this rule. Garuda was after his life. Kaliya fled away from the *ramanak dweep* and got an asylum in the river Yamuna. The place was safe because Garuda under the curse of Saubhahri *rishi* couldn't come to Yamuna due to fear of losing his life. Garuda earlier used to kill fish from Yamuna. Once he killed the king of the fish and that caused great panic among them. Saubhari moved by their panic, cursed Garuda that if he visited Yamuna again he would lose his life.

143. The pool of Yamuna where Kaliya stayed had become poisonous and nobody survived taking the water from there. So much so that the wind coming from the pool used to burn the green vegetation in its immediate vicinity. Several innocent

cows, birds and human beings had lost their lives after taking water from the pool. In order to liberate the pool from Kaliya, srikrishna once jumped into the pool water from the *kadamb* tree over the bank. The great splash of his leap into the water incurred the wrath of Kailya, and he attacked over Srikrishna by coiling around him closely. Srikrishna inflated His body to the extent that Kaliya could release the coil and began looking for a chance to attack over Him with his one hundred one hoods. Srikrishna managed to walk vigorously over his hoods. He gradually increased His weight causing grievous injury to his hoods. Kaliya's wives and children rushed to the scene to save him by offering a mercy appeal to Srikrishna. On compassionate ground He granted relief to Kaliya with a condition to leave Yamuna immediately and go back to *ramanak*. Since His foot prints were marked over his hoods, He assured Kaliya not to be afraid of Garuda any more. In the meanwhile, Yashoda, Balrama, Nand and others had also arrived to wish Srikrishna's welfare against the fight with the deadly Kaliya *nag*. Initially, seeing Srikrishna under coil of Kaliya, Yashoda was about to jump into the pool to rescue Him but she was forbade by Balrama since he knew His potential. Everybody watched the whole incidence from the bank, and Srikrishna came out victorious which created an occasion for a great celebration in *vrindavan*.

144. At the night they all stayed outside celebrating the occasion. At the dead of the night wild fire broke out (10/17). They cried for help and Srikrishna had to swallow the entire gamut of fire and saved the people of *vrindavan*.

145. In an another incident (10/18) a demon, *pralambasur*, disguised as a *gop* joined the playing teams with view to kill both the brothers. Srikrishna realized the game plan and he divided the players into two groups such that both the brothers were in different groups, and Pralmaba was in Srikrishna's group. The rule of the game was that the defeated team was to

carry over shoulder the victorious group. Srikrishna group lost and Pralamba was to carry Balaram. He took him away over his shoulder with an intention to kill him. Balaram sensed some foul, and he hit over his head due to which Pralamaba revealed his demonic form and lifted him up in the air. Ultimately, Balram prevailed upon him and killed him in the air and the demon fell dead like a big chunk of rock.

146. In one more incident a fire broke out entrapping (10/19) the cows in the grazing jungle known as *munjavati* where cows didn't get water either to drink. Ultimately Srikrishna, when called upon to help, asked them to shut their eyes. He swallowed the wild fire and they were safely brought back to *vrindavan*.

147. The **flute play** (*venu geet*) (10/21) in one of the autumn (*sharat*) months is notable feat of Srikrishna. The natural entities (trees, river, birds, *goverdhan parvat*, etc.) of *vrindavan* including the human beings were spell bound by His flute play.

148. It was the month of *margsheersha* (*hemant ritu* – the season preceding winter). The maiden *gopi* observed *katyayani vrata* (10/22) on the bank of Yamuna. *Vrata* is performed by taking bath before sunrise and figure out with the help of sand the image of goddess (variously called *mahamaye*, *katyayani*) on the river bank itself. The image is offered flowers, fragrance, sweetened rice with milk (*havishayanna*). They sustain until next morning on single time food of *havishayanna* offered to the goddess. This continues for the whole month and the objective is to get Srikrishna as their husband. As usual the maiden *gopi* came to Yamuna river before sunrise for bath. They put-off their cloths and entered into water. Srikrishna came, in the meanwhile, and after picking up their cloths climbed up the *kadamb* tree on the bank of the river. He announced from the tree top that those who wanted their cloths had to come to Him. *Gopi* pleaded in vain about their

nakedness. They threatened to complain about His mischief to Nand *baba*. Nothing worked, and eventually they came out of water securing their privacy by palms. Srikrishna reminded them about their sin by taking naked bath in the river water. The deity of the water *varun*, and goddess Yamuna were not happy with them, and that would be a hindrance to the completion of their *vrata*. He advised them to beg pardon with folded hands. They obliged by doing what He advised. He assured them that He would meet them in the next autumn and fulfill their wishes.

149. Once the accompanying friends of Srikrishna and Balaram felt hungry in the forest. On their request to arrange some food, Srikrishna advised them to visit a nearby place where Brahmins (10/23) were performing *angirasa ygya* and request them that Srikrishna and Balaram were hungry and they wanted some food. The boys returned empty handed. They were again sent back with the same message to their wives. The moment they narrated the message of Srikrishna and Balaram to the female-Brahmins (*ygyapatni*) they rushed with the available food items to the place of His stay. On their arrival with food Srikrishna was very happy and He advised them to immediately go back and join their husbands in the *ygya* because their absence might be a constraint in successful completion of the *ygya*. The female Brahmins were happy to see Him and wanted their eternal relation with Him. He blessed them and sent them back.

150. It was customary to offer annual oblation to Indra, the rain god (10/24). Srikrishna forbade Nand in doing that any more. He advised to perform *ygya* in hounor of the mountain, *giriraj*, called **Goverdhan**. Srikrishna manifested Himself in the form a huge peak over *giriraj* and asked them to offer the *ygya* materials. There was a great festivity and all sorts of food were offered which He accepted gladly. Indra became angry on such development that he was ignored and in retaliation he

thought of teaching them lesson. He caused in *vraj* heavy down pour. To protect the natives, Srikrishna managed to hold aloft the Goverdhan mountain over His hand (10/25), and everybody including the live stock got a safe shelter underneath which worked like a mammoth umbrella. After seven days of torrential rains Indra gave up. The normalcy was restored and natives began their normal routine life. Conceding his defeat Indra was in the look out to pay honour to Him. Indra could find (10/27) a lonely moment of Srikrishna and offered his crown over His feet and begged for pardon. The celestial cow (*kamdhenu*) who also came to pay her respect to Srikrishna offered a milk bath to Him. After the milk bath was performed, Indra arranged through his mount, *airavat* elephant, water from *akashganga* (celestial *ganges*). He was given a good bath and thereafter decorated with lots of flowers and this concluded with a sincere prayer by other gods also. After this coronation, Srikrishna got a new name of **Govinda**, which means the one who is Indra (king) of cows (*go* in Sanskrit means cow).

151. In the bright fortnight of the month of *kartika* Nandjee observed *ekadashi* (keeping fast on eleventh day of each fortnight) and pretty early in the following morning before dawn he went to Yamuna for bath to observe (10/29) the *dwadashi* (the following day of *ekadashi*, at the commencement of which the fast is broken). Since it was wee hours before break of the day, and human beings were enjoined by holy scriptures from entering river water so early, he was caught by the messengers of *varuna*, god of water. He was brought a hostage to *varun lok*. When *gopa* learnt about this, they urged upon srkrishna to find him out. He went to *varunlok* and got him released.

152. *Gopa* (the natives of *vrindavan*) have by that time fully realized the divine potential of Srikrishna. They insisted to show them His divine abode, *vaikunthloka*. Subsequently, He

took them to the deepest pool of Yamuna, which later became known as *brahmadaha*. They were asked to take bath there. No sooner they entered the water and took a dip than they realized about their own **eternal individual entity** (everyone as a separate soul, or called *jeevatma*) (10/28) beyond the physical body and different from the universal spirit. After enjoying for sometime the tryst with their soul, they were taken to *parampad – vaikunthlok*. Amongst several divine peculiarities, they saw Srikrishna being constantly prayed by *veda* manifested in the physical form of divine beings. After sometime, each one of them came out of water fully satisfied and happy.

153. Srikrishna, being the universal spirit, knew how to discipline the individual souls. His *rasleela* is an example of such exercise. Even if *gopi* were having some physical lust for Him, He invited them to join the *rasleela* in the moonlit night of *aswin purnima* (full moon night of the bright fortnight) over the camphor- white sands of the river Yamuna. First he advised them to go back to their homes as they had come to Him (10/29..10/32)⁸ hearing His flute notes suspending their domestic engagements. Later when all the *gopi* indicated their sole objective of refuge under His lotus feet, He agreed to entertain each one of them by exchange of pleasantries and being with each of them simultaneously. Then He suddenly disappeared and the *gopi* began searching Him among themselves. He was not found and they got disappointed; they ran to the nearby bushes and forest but He was not traceable. They engaged themselves by dividing themselves into two groups, one represented Srikrishna, and the other represented the *gopi*. Srikrishna group of *gopi* behaved like Him, began embracing and dancing with the other group of *gopi*. This

⁸ In first *sloka* of 10/31 it is mentioned that His consort goddess *lakshmi* has also come down to *vrajbhumi* leaving *vaikunthaloka*; No direct name is mentioned through out the text but this may be an indication towards *Raadhaa*.

imaginary source of enjoyment couldn't last long and in His real absence they began feeling desolated. Suddenly, He appeared again (10/33) and manifested in multitude, to be with each of them in a dancing ring. It was the scene of performing all sorts of dances with classical movement of the various organs of the body, the anklets, the bracelets and other ornaments. A sublime scene of ultimate happiness and pleasure devoid of physical lust permeated the site. The night ended; moon began peeping back from the western horizon; sun began knocking on the eastern horizon. He commanded them to go back to their homes and happily they went back.

154. It was *shivraatri* (13th day of dark fortnight of *phalgun* month) and Nand with the natives went to *ambikavana* to worship *shiva* and *ambika*. At night a python attacked him and began swallowing him down its throat. Srikrishna came to his (10/34) rescue and His simple touch by His feet changed the whole scene. The python became a handsome man and he prayed Srikrishna for his liberation. In his previous birth, he was known as Sudarshan and was a wealthy and a handsome *gandharva*. His arrogance of handsomeness, incurred him a curse from the sages of the lineage of *angira* for ridiculing them for their ugliness.

155. In an another incident, a *yaksha* called Sankhchuda, (10/34) hijacked the group of *gopi* forcibly. Seeing Balaram and Srikrishna following him, he dumped those *gopi* and ran away. But Srikrishna didn't spare him; He chased and drew a severe blow over his head. He fell dead, and the crown from his head was gifted to Balaram.

156. One evening a mighty ox with a large hump stormed into *vrindavan*. He was a demon, Aristasur in disguise. Srikrishna very easily took him by his horns and he was killed after some sporting moments.

157. Narada once again went to Kans and informed him, "Vasudev and Devaki had a son known as Srikrishna and He is

now with Nand. Balarma another son of Vasudev from his wife Rohini, is also at *vraj* staying with Nand. These boys are going to be your killer. The female child (10/36) that had escaped from your hands, was the daughter of Yashoda.” Hearing that Kans became very furious and put back again Devaki and Vasudev in prison. He sent for his advisors and chalked out a plan to invite Nand with those boys to Mathura to enjoy the archery celebration. He commanded Akrur (a known *yaduvanshai* personality) to visit *vrindavan* to invite them. His (Kans’s) game plan was that once Srikrishna arrived at Mathura, the mighty elephant Kuvlayapeeth, would be provoked to kill Him. If He escaped that, He would be killed by Chanur and Musti the reputed wrestlers of his (Kans’s) court. He also, in the meanwhile, sent another demon Kesi to *vrindavan* to eliminate those brothers.

158. Kesi, in disguise of a horse, thronged (10/37) the streets of *vrindavan*. Seeing Srikrishna he charged an attack over him. Srikrishna very swiftly held the horse by his hair, and when he wanted to bite Him, He pushed his hand into his mouth causing immediate death.

159. Another demon, (10/37) Vyomasur disguised as one of the *gopa* joined the playing team of the boys. He began carrying the boys one by one to a cave and put them inside by closing the entry to the cave with a heavy rock piece. Srikrishna sensed his foul play, and He charged over him. The demon revealed his real form and tried to kill Srikrishna. But He foiled his bid by holding him firmly by his throat until he died.

160. Commanded by Kans, Akrur set out to invite Nand with Srikrishna and Balaram to Mathura. While on his way, he imagined himself very fortunate that he was going to meet Srikrishna, who is a rare object of meditation for saints and sages. When entering *vrindvan*, he noticed the foot-prints carrying the symbols of bolt, barley, lotus etc. he came down

the chariot and prostrated over those footprints of Srikrishna. On reaching *vrindavan*, he was enchanted by the handsome personality of Srikrishna and Balaram. He met Nand, (10/38) and informed him about the special celebration being organised at Mathra. He extended the invitation of Kans to all the natives of *vrindavan* along with Srikrishna, Balarama to visit Mathura to participate in the celebration. Nand made all the preparations and in the morning along with all the natives left for Mathura. His carts carrying milk and its products as a gift for Kans were lead by the chariot of Akrur carrying Srikrishna and Balaram. *Gopi* were upset from the separation of Srikrishna, but got solace by some indications of His coming back.

161. On way, Akrur stopped and went to river Yamuna for bath. Srikrishna and Balaram also drank water from the river. When Akrur had a dip, he found both the brothers sitting inside the water. Puzzled, he craned his neck out of water to verify the reality. To his utmost surprise, both the brothers were seen seating in the chariot. Again when he dipped, he got a divine glance of *sheshajee* inside the water holding Narayana on his lap in sleeping posture. He offered his sincere prayer and came out of water. He began chanting His eternal glory (10/40) of ten principal incarnations of *matsya*, *hayagreeva*, *kachapa*, *varaha*, *nrisimha*, *vamana*, *prashurama*, *rama*, *budha*, and *kalki* . When he came out of water and after performing his *sandhya*, he began driving the chariot. Srikrishna enquired as to why he looked a little puzzled. He expressed that He was carrying the supreme spirit in His chariot and nothing can be more puzzling than this.

162. They reached Mathura where Nand had already arrived with his group. They stayed in an orchard on the outskirts of the city. Srikrishna and Balaram stayed with Nand and Akrur went alone to Kans to inform about their arrival. Before separating,

when Akrur requested Srikrishna to visit his home, He assured that He would visit his home (10/41) after killing Kans.

163. Following day in the afternoon both the brothers accompanied by some *gopa* (herders) entered Mathura city. On way they found a washer man carrying good garments. Srikrishna asked one of them for Himself. The washer-man didn't oblige rather threatened Him for His audacity and consequent punishment leading to imprisonment if he asked for the royal garments (which he was carrying to be delivered to the palace of the king, Kans). Hearing that Srikrishna slapped over his cheek and instantly he dropped dead. Both the brothers and his friends dressed themselves with the choicest dress from the lot and moved around the city. On way, a tailor met (10/41) them, who enchanted by His charming personality offered voluntarily his services to fix the dress properly over them. Moving further He entered the house of a gardener (named Sudama) and got decorated with lot of fragrance and flowers enhancing His charming personality.

164. Further (10/42) on His way they met a hunchbacked woman (named Trivakra, also called Kubja) with charming face carrying sandal paste. She was a royal maid of Kans, but she offered them voluntarily the sandal paste she was carrying. Srikrishna smeared the yellow paste over His face and body, while Balaram used the red paste. In return of service, Srikrishna blessed her by pulling her hands up anchoring her feet under His feet which helped eliminate her physical deformity. That made her look younger and beautiful. On her request to go with her to her home, He assured to visit her home later. He moved forward by making enquiry about the *rangshala* (the venue) where the bow was placed for the celebration. He entered the place ignoring the security ring and lifted the bow in His hands which broke into pieces the moment He pulled the string. When attacked by the security forces He dealt them firmly using the broken pieces of the

bow and victorious he came out of the *rangshala*. When Kans learnt about the episode he became upset, and at night he had bad dreams indicating his imminent end.

165. Next day all the preparations (10/43) were made in the wrestling ground. Nand and other invitees were given due seat among the audience while Kans himself held a royal seat among other dignitaries. While entering the wrestling ground Srikrishna and Balaram were stopped by the Kuvalayapeeda, the royal elephant guarding the security. Srikrishna took the challenge with the elephant and soon the elephant was killed. With the broken tusks in His hands and his cloths spotted with the elephant's blood, He with Balaram entered the wrestling court (10/44). Initially He declined the invitation to fight with Chanur, but challenged by Chanur he took the contest and soon killed the royal wrestler. Balaram was engaged with Mushtika, another wrestler, whom he also killed easily. Other wrestlers, Kuta, Shal, and Toshal were killed when protested the killing of Chanur and Mushtika. Upset with unbelievable developments, Kans commanded his security forces to kill both the brothers and arrest Nand along with his accompanying herders. In the meanwhile, Srikrishna leapt up to the podium of Kans. While Kans was drawing his sword, He pushed him down the podium, and came over him holding his hair in His hands. Kans fell dead. When protested, his eight brothers were also killed by Him and Balaram. Immediately after that He went to see Vasudev and Devaki in the prison, and touched their feet in utmost reverence. Vasudev and Devaki were released from the prison but realising His supreme divinity, under great awe, they couldn't dare show their parental affection to Him.

166. Ugrasena was crowned the king of Mathura (10/45). Nand and other *vraj* people were given a warm farewell. They left for *vraj* with heavy heart leaving Srikrishna and Balaram in Mathura. Vasudev and Devaki invited Gargacharya (their

family preceptor) for investing *ygyopaveet sanskar* (investing the sacred thread) to Srikrishna and Balaram. The occasion was celebrated and they were initiated to *gayatri mantra* (ॐ भूर्भुवःस्वः तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गोदेवस्य धीमही धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्) by Gargacharya.

167. Subsequently both the brothers were sent to Ujjain to join the school of learning run by Sandipani. On completion of the schooling, (10/45) they were asked by Sandipani as a token of fee of education, to get back his son who was drowned in the ocean. When Srikrishna arrived at the coast, the ocean god came out and informed Him that the boy was killed by a demon called Sankhasur residing deep inside the ocean. Srikrishna entered the ocean and killed the demon but the boy was not found. Further, He went to the god of death, Yamraj to retrieve the child. The child was offered back to Him, whom He brought to Sandipani. Both the brothers left the school for Mathura after receiving Sandipani's blessings.

168. On the initiative of Srikrishna, (10/46) Udhava one of His close friends and a known person of *vrishni* dynasty, came to *vraj* to pay respect to Nand, Yashoda and convey His assuring solace to *gopi*. He remained there for months (10/47) and comprehended fully the unalloyed love of *gopi* to Srikrishna. He paid a visit to all the places of His pastime at *vraj*. While moving around he preferred to stay as creepers in *vraj* to allow him to get the cover of His foot-dust. After several months he came back to Mathura to apprise Him about the latest of *vraj*.

169. As assured earlier when He entered Mathura, Srikrishna with Udhava obliged Kubja by paying a visit to her home. He stayed there for quite sometime as desired by her. (10/48). To honour His words He visited (10/48) place of Akrur also. He impressed upon him to visit Hastinapur to collect the latest welfare of *pandva* who had come to Hastinapur after the death of their father Pandu. Akrur went to

Hastinapur and (10/49) stayed there for quite some time meeting Dhrutrashta, Kunti, Dronacharya, Bheeshmapitamatha and others. He noticed the split affection of Dhrutrashta to his own sons than to Pandva. Kunti recounted her days at Mathura and offered a sincere and tearful prayer to Srikrishna seeking the ultimate welfare of her sons. Akrur came back to Mathura and apprised Srikrishna of the status of *pandva* at Hastinapur.

Srikrishna vaibhava -leela (pastime of potential)

170. Daughters of Jarasandh, Apti and Prapati were the wives of Kans. On his death, they approached (10/50) their father to avenge the murder of their husband. Jarasandh gathered a huge army and attacked Mathura. Srikrishna and Balarama got two celestial chariots to face the enemy. The chariot of Srikrishna was driven by Daruka and the flag over His chariot was marked with Garuda, where as the Balaram's chariot carried the flag marked with palm tree. Jarasandha suffered a humiliating defeat for he lost his entire army. He went back and attacked seventeen times over Mathura, each time to go back defeated.

171. Before eighteenth attack over Mathura by Jarasandh, Srikrishna established a new city deep inside the western coast (10/50). The new city (Dwarka) was 48 kosa (= 96 miles = 154 km) long and equally wide and the natives of Mathura were rehabilitated there.

172. Kalayavan on the advice of Narad had surrounded Mathura with his huge army. Balaram remained alone inside Mathura, and Srikrishna came out of Mathura on foot wearing a garland of lotus flower. Kalayavan could immediately realise that He was srirkrishna Himself. Seeing Him unarmed, Kalayavan also threw his arms. He followed Him, challenging to fight. Srikrishna was running away closely being followed by him. He lead him into a mountain cave and managed to go

out of his sight. Kalayavan, instead found a man sleeping covered in a wrapper and he mistook that Srikrishna in disguise. When he kicked (10/51) the sleeping man, he opened his eyes with anger which burnt Kalayavan to ashes. The sleeping man was Muchukund of Ikshavaku dynasty, son of Mandhata. He was relieved by Kartikeya to relax after he fought a long battle against demons in favour of gods. He got a boon from gods that whoever would disturb his sleep would burn to ashes. This has caused the end of Kalayavan. Srikrishna appeared before Muchukund, who when knew He was Srikrishna, offered a sincere prayer to Him and got blessed for a dispassionate service to Him in his next birth.

173. While coming back to Mathura after elimination of Kalayavan, He defeated the huge army laying seize of Mathura. He also collected huge wealth from the defeated army and He was about to enter Mathura that Jarasandh made an attack over the city. He left the huge wealth behind to be possessed by Jarasandh, (10/52) and with Balaram ran away from Mathura. Jarasandh followed Him and until he climbed *pravarshan* mountain from where He became traceless. Jarasandh, finally put the whole mountain under fire which caused Srikrishna and Balaram to jump down the mountain and made their way to Dwarka. On way, Balaram was married to Revati, daughter of Raivata the king of Anarta.

174. While at Anarta, Srikrishna got a message (carried by a Brahmin) from Rukmini, the daughter of Bheeshmak, the king of Vidarbha (Kundinipur). The Brahmin narrated her message, “Rukmi, my elder brother has fixed my marriage with Shishupal. I always cherish You as my husband, therefore, You should rush immediately and rescue me. The marriage date is day after tomorrow.” Srikrishna immediately rushed to Kundinipur with the Brahmin messenger. He found Rukmini coming out in a procession to offer family worship to the goddess Ambika (10/53) before marriage. When she finished

her worship and came out of the temple, Srikrishna hijacked her in His chariot. Shisupal the would-be groom with his friendly kings had already arrived at Kundinipur. Balaram also had arrived there with a large contingent of forces when he heard that Srikrishna had left alone for Kundinipur on message of Rukmini.

175. Srikrishna was attacked by Shishupal and his other friendly kings, viz. Jarashadh, salva etc. With the help of Balaram the enemies were defeated badly and Srikrishna with Rukmini rushed towards Dwarka. In the meanwhile he had to face Rukmi also who came chasing Him because he took that incident as his personal insult. Rukmi with his army was humiliated to a bad defeat. On the request of Rukmini, his life was spared by Srikrishna. He made him hostage and put him tied with his wrapper after cutting his hair and moustache. He was later freed by Balaram. Rukmi had taken a vow that he would not comeback to Kundinipur until he killed Srikrishna. He established an another city Bhojcut, in honour of his vow and didn't go back to Kundinipur (10/54). After reaching Dwarka, marriage with Rukmini was solemnised with great show of celebration and festivity.

176. Subsequently, Pradyumna was born to Rukmini. He was as handsome as Srikrishna and was said to be the incarnation of Kamdev (cupid). When he was ten days old, a demon called Sambrasur abducted him from natal home and threw him in the ocean. He was afraid of him as he was predicted to be his killer (10/55). In the ocean a fish swallowed him and the same fish fell in the net of fishermen and it was sold to Sambrasur. In the kitchen when the fish was cut Pradyumna came out alive and the maid servant in the kitchen Mayavati (she was Rati, wife of Kamdev in disguise working with Sambrasur) adopted the child for rearing. Narada came to Rati and hinted about the child as her husband. In course of time he became young and with the help of Rati, killed the

demon and both arrived happily to Dwarka. Initially nobody could recognise them, but Narada came and narrated the entire story to Rukmini and then his arrival was celebrated as a festive occasion.

177. Satrajeet, a native of Dwarka pleased the sun god by his worship (**10/56**) and got a brilliant gem (called *smayantak mani*) as a boon from the sun god. Everyday he used to get about eight *bhar* (8 x 10 gm = 80 gm) of gold after its due worship in the morning. Srikrishna advised to offer that gem to the king, Ugrasen (who was the king of Dwarka on migrating from Mathura) but he didn't oblige. Once his brother, Prasenjeet put that gem around his neck and went to the forest for hunting. A lion killed him with his horse and took away the gem. Jamvan (a mighty bear associated with *ramavatar*) also resided in that forest. He killed the lion and took the gem in his possession. When Prasenjeet didn't come back home, Satrajeet accused killing Prasenjeet for the gem. Srikrishna with a few persons went in the forest and could locate the dead bodies of Prasenjeet, his horse and the lion. Following some footprints He entered a cave alone advising His men to stay outside. Inside the cave he saw some children playing with that gem. In the meanwhile, seeing the stranger in Srikrishna, the children raised the alarm. Jamvan stormed at the scene, and engaged Srikrishna in a duel. After fighting for twenty eight days Jamvan felt exhausted and at the same time he also realised that in Srikrishna it was His master of *thretayuga*, *Sriram*. He surrendered before Him, and when he knew that He had come searching that gem, he offered back the gem to Him. He also offered his daughter, Jamvanti to remain in His service for ever.

178. Srikrishna returned the gem to Satrajeet after coming back from the forest. Satrajeet felt ashamed of false accusation to Srikrishna and in return he offered his daughter Satybhama to be married to Him. He also offered the gem to Him. The

marriage with Satybhama was celebrated with great festivity and Srikrishna returned the gem to Satrajeet and asked him to give only the gold to the king Ugrasen which he used to get regularly from the gem.

179. Being provoked by Akrur and Kritvarma, Shatdhanva killed Satrajeet for the gem. At that time Srikrishna and Balaram had gone to Hastinapur hearing the incidence of burning of *Pandva* in *lakshgriha*. Satyabhama rushed to Hastinapur to apprise Srikrishna of killing of her father. They immediately came back to Dwarka in search of Shatdhanva. **(10/57)** When Shatdhanva asked help from Akrur and Kritvarma, they denied the help against Srikrishna. He dropped the gem to Akrur and left Dwarka. Srikrishna and Balaram chased him and he was caught in Mithilapur. On his killing, the gem was not found in his possession. Hearing the killing of Shatdhava, Kritvarma and Akrur left Dwarka. After their leaving of Dwarka famine stalked that area. The story goes that Swafalk, the father of Akrur was married to Gandini, the daughter of the king of Kashi in return of his ability to fetch rain. Seeing the grim situation due to famine, Srikrishna sent a messenger to find out Akrur who was on pilgrimage performing *ygya*, to get him back to Dwarka. On his coming back, normalcy returned in Dwarka. It is also said that the presence of the gem drives away all sorts of evils from that area. Akrur gave the gem to Srikrishna which was in his possession and mentioned that afraid of Him, Shatdhanva, had given that to him. Srikrishna showed the gem to Balaram and his wives including the natives of Dwarka to convince them that the gem was not in His possession rather it was possessed by Akrur. Srikrishna praised him for performing several *ygya* at several sacred places. He returned the gem to Akrur and asked him to give the gold to be obtained from that.

180. After *lakshagriha* incidence, Srikrishna again **(10/58)** made a sympathy visit to *Pandva* who were residing at

Indraprastha. This place was developed by Viswakarma himself. Once when Arjun and Srikrishna were out in the forest they met Kalindi meditating on the bank of Yamuna. She was daughter of the sun god, and she had long cherished to get Narayana as her husband. On the initiative of Arjun she consented to accept Srikrishna as her husband.

181. While they were moving around they reached *khandva* forest. Srikrishna had blessed fire god (*davanal*) to satisfy his hunger by burning the *khandava* forest. The entire forest (10/58) was burnt but Maydanava was saved by Arjun. In gratitude, Maydanava built a strange hall at Indraprastah where Duryodhana mistook dry place as place full of water and place having water was mistaken as dry land. Fire god was also pleased with Arjun, and he gifted him a celestial chariot driven by horses, *gandeeva dhanush*, two quivers ever full of arrows, a *kavacha* to shield the body against injury of arrows and other weapons.

182. On way back to Dwarka Srikrishna married Mitravinda (10/58) sister of the kings of Avanti (Ujjain). Later, he married Satya the princess of *koshal* king by satisfying the condition of taming seven mighty oxen. Further he married Bhadra the princess of *kaikeya desh*. In one another race of brides, He won the hands of Lakshamaana, the daughter of the king of *madra*.

183. Bhaumasur (also called Narkasur) was the son of the goddess earth. (10/59) He established his capital at Pragjyotishpur and was famous as a notorious and mighty demon. He had grabbed the umbrella of Varun (god of water), the ear-rings of Aditi (mother of the gods), and the top of *meru* (*maniparvata* the favourite resort of gods). Indra requested Srikrishna to control the atrocities of Bhaumasur. Srikrishna with Satybhamā mounting *garuda* visited Pragjyoishpur. Initially he faced a five headed ferocious demon Mur. When Mur was killed, his seven sons attacked

Him and they were also killed. At the end Naraksur attacked with his strong contingent of elephants. Soon he was also killed. Mother earth appeared on killing of his son and offered a prayer to Srikrishna. Her prayerⁱ

26 श्लोक

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namh pankaj nabhaya, namh pankaj maline, namh pankaj netraya, namaste pankajanghrye” has become popular among devotees as one of the most sanctified prayers. He liberated sixteen thousand and one hundred princesses from the prison of Bhaumasur. They all wanted Him to be their husband. He conceded to their proposal and sent them one by one, in His personal monitoring, mounting palanquin to Dwarka. Srikrishna while coming back went to the heaven and returned ear-rings of Aditi. While leaving heaven for Dwarka, to fulfil the desire of Satyabhama, He lifted *parijat* (celestial flower plant). For that He had to face the protests of Indra and other gods but He succeeded in taking that to Dwarka where it was planted in His favourite garden. He solemnised marriage with all the sixteen thousand and one hundred women liberated from the evil clutch of Bhaumasur. He led a happy life with each of them simultaneously which surprised *Brahma* and other gods for His *leela* is incomprehensible.

184. Srikrishna got ten sons from each of His eight principal queens as well as from sixteen thousand and one hundred wives (10/61). His son Pradyumna (from Rukmini) was married to Rati as well as Rukmvati (daughter of Rukmini's brother Rukmi). Later, Anirudha, the son of Pradyumna was married to Rochana, granddaughter of Rukmi. The marriage was solemnised at Bhojcut. Srikrishna and Balaram had joined the marriage procession at Bhojcut. Although, Rukmi the brother of Rukmini had animosity against Srikrishna he

organised this marriage to please his sister Rukmini. While they were at Bhojcut, Balaram engaged in a dice game with Rukmi and he was by false tricks defeated in the game. Enraged Balaram killed Rukmi and injured his other supporting friends.

185. Baanasur was the eldest son of demon Bali who is associated with the legend of lord *vaman*. His capital was at Sonitpur. He was a great devotee of Shiva and was blessed with one thousand hands. Once when Shiva performed *tandva nritya* (cosmic dance), Baanasur using his one thousand hands presented an excellent musical orchestra alone. Shiva was highly pleased with him. His daughter, Usha once dreamt about her love with Anirudha (the son of Pradyumna, grandson of Srikrishna). She was not aware of who this Anirudha was nor had she ever met him except in the dream. Taking hints from her dream, (10/62) Chitrlekha (her close friend with yogic capabilities) drew the sketches of several persons and finally she could identify the one whom she met in dream, and it was Anirudha son of Pradyumna. Chitrlekha using her yogic potential brought Anirudha from Dwarka while he was asleep. Usha and Anirudha loved each other and stayed longer together without knowledge of Baanasur. Somehow Baanasur came to know about the presence of Anirudha in the fort of his daughter. He inspected the palace and found them together. Anirudha was arrested and put in *nagapasha* (serpent fetter) by Baanasur. Narada arrived at Dwarka (10/63) and broke the news of the whereabouts of Anirudha. *yaduvanshi* army lead by Srikrishna, Balaram, Pradyumna, Satyaki etc., surrounded Sonitpur. Fierce fighting took place between demons and *yaduvanshi*. Shiva, Kartikeya had also joined the battle in favour of Baanasur. Ultimately, the demons' army was routed and all the hands of Baanasur except four were cut down by Srikrishna. His life was spared because of Shiva's interference. He handed over Usha and Anirudha to Srikrishna. When they

came back, a great marriage ceremony was celebrated at Dwarka.

186. Nruga was a great king (**10/64**) known for his liberal charities and *ygya*. He used to donate lacs of cows to the Brahmins. Once a cow came from the house of a dispassionate Brahmin and merged in the herd of the royal cows. The herd was donated to some other Brahmin in gift. The first Brahmin in search of his cow spotted her in the herd donated by the king. He went to the king and complained about his cow donated to the other Brahmin by the king. The king couldn't get back that cow because the second Brahmin was not ready to change that cow by any other cow. The king offered another cow with more wealth to the first Brahmin but the Brahmin didn't accept the offer anything other than his own cow and returned disgusted. When the king died, he was punished for this sin, and he became a lizard. He was lying in a dry well of a forest near Dwarka. When Srikrishna once went there with his kith and kin, the lizard was spotted in the well. Srikrishna took the lizard out when others failed to bail out the lizard out of the well. Due to His touch the lizard was transformed into a human being with a charming personality. He was king Nruga, and he offered a sincere prayer to Him and being blessed by Him left for heavenly abode.

187. Paundrak and Kashiraj (**10/66**) were two royal friends, former being the king of Karush and the latter the king of Kashi. Paundrak had decorated himself in the form of Narayana by way of having four hands equipped with *sankha*, *chakra*, *gada* and *padma*. He contested Srikrishna that he (Paundrak) was the real incarnation of Narayana. On his challenge, Srikrishna came to Kashi with his large army and after destroying the army of Paundrak and Kashiraj, he killed both of them. The son of Kashiraj, Sudakshina wanted to take revenge of his father. He pleased Shiva who advised him to obtain a deadly being from the oblation in the fire. Kritya thus

came out of the fire who attacked Srikrishna but being chased by *chakra* of Srikrishna, Kritya came back and killed Sudakshina and other Brahmins who were involved in putting oblation in the fire. Srikrishna's *chakra* finally destroyed Kritya.

188. There was a mighty monkey Dwid, a great friend of Bhaumasur (10/67). He was brother of Maind and secretary to Sugreeva in *treat yuga*. On hearing the news of death of Bhaumasur, he became upset and vowed to avenge his friend's killing with Srikrishna. He created several anarchic situation to provoke the anger of Srikrishna. By chance, one day his misdeeds caught the attention of Balaram and he was killed in the duel fight.

189. Samb was Srikrishna's son from Jambvati. He fell in love with Lakshamana, (10/68) the daughter of Duryodhana. Consequently he was once caught with her and was put behind the bars by the *kaurav*. Balaram, hearing the news of his arrest by *kaurav*, came to Hastinapur and tried to persuade them to release Samb with Lakshamana. When they didn't listen to his words, he applied his plough and pestle to tear the part of the land encompassing Hastinapur and drown that in the river *ganga*. Realising the imminent catastrophe of getting drowned in the river *ganga*, *kaurav* accepted his terms and Samb was married to Lakshamana.

190. Once Narada came to Dwarka (10/69) with a view to find out how Srikrishna interacted with his over sixteen thousand wives. First, he happened to enter the mansion of Rukmini, where He was being fanned by her. Narada was given a warm welcome by them and after a while he left the palace and entered another palace where Srikrishna was playing dice with Udhava and one of His wives. Here also Narada was given due respect as if He didn't meet him immediately before that at Rukmini's palace. Thus Narada made a round of all the mansions, and Srikrishna was found

present at a time at all the places doing quite different things what he was seen doing at other places. He was highly impressed by His cosmic and infinite personality engaged in multitude of activities simultaneously. He bowed down at His lotus feet and on offering his prayer he left playing his guitar.

191. Normally, Srikrishna in Dwarka, (10/70) used to observe a strict routine of getting early in the morning before sunrise. He would devote sometime in deep meditation, recitation of *gayatri mantra*, and thereafter He would get ready after taking bath. Dressing Himself beautifully with new and attractive garments and ornaments He would ride His chariot driven by Daruka, and attend *sudharma* (publicly meeting the citizens) in the afternoon in the royal conference hall of Dwarka. He was accompanied by His wives and would give audience to all sorts of presentations for His entertainment.

192. Once while He was in *sudharma*, He met a messenger (10/70) of the kings imprisoned by Jarasandh for their immediate liberation from the clutches of Jarasandh. At the same time, Narada came to Him to extend an invitation of Yudhishtira to attend the *rajsuya ygya* being organised by him. Assuring the messenger of imprisoned kings for immediate action, He left immediately for Indraprastha with His eight principal queens to attend the *rajsuya ygya* of Yudhishtira. At the *ygya* place He was accorded warm welcome by five *pandav*, Kunti, Draupadi, Subhadra and others.

193. Before commencement of the *ygya* royal messengers, represented by four brothers were sent to four cardinal directions (Sahdev in the South, Nakul in the West, Arjun in the North, Bheem in the East) to ensure sovereignty of Yudhishtira. Excluding Jarasandh (10/73) all other kings accepted and gave valuable gifts for the successful completion of the *rajsuya ygya*. Arjun, Srikrishna, and Bheem disguised as Brahmins went to meet Jarasandh. Jarasandh was liberal to

Brahmins and had been known for meeting their demand. These three also asked for the assurance of Jarasandh that he would meet their demands. Jarasandh assured them to satisfy them to his utmost capacity. Srikrishna disclosed their identity and sought a physical fight with him. Jarasandh rejected Srikrishna as weak and fugitive, Arjun was also rejected being too young to face him, and finally he chose Bheem his match. They got first engaged in mace fighting, and later took to wrestling which continued for twenty seven days. At night Jarasandh treated Bheem as his friend but during day hours they were engaged in fierce fighting. On the twenty-eighth day Srikrishna hinted a trick to Bheem which worked and he tore Jarasandh into two parts running from foot to head. Both the parts were thrown in opposite directions, and thus came the end of Jarasandh. His son, Sahdev was crowned king by Srikrishna, and all the kings who were imprisoned by Jarasandh were released.

194. *Rajsuya ygya* commenced with due *vedic* practices. Among all the revered saints, sages, kings, and elite elders present, Srikrishna, by consensus, was nominated the observer (10/74). Shishupal objected to this move, and he began abusing Him recalling His previous misdeeds of lifting Rukmini. Srikrishna allowed him to continue abusing Him, but when he crossed the limit of one hundred abuses, He moved His *chakra* and he was beheaded. *Rajsuya ygya* was successfully completed.

195. After the *ygya*, Duryodhana once came with his brothers to meet *pandav* and while entering the palace of *pandva* at Indraprshtha he was mistaken by the features of the land carved out beautifully by the famous architect Mayadanav. Where it was dry land he prepared himself to wade through water (10/75), and where it was water he got trapped unaware and wet his cloths. This made others to laugh

at him and he took that as his personal insult by *pandav* and left the place in great anger.

196. To avenge the killing of Shishupal, Salva worshipped Shiva and got an invisible plane in boon. He wreaked havoc over Dwarka aboard the invisible plane. He was however, later killed by Srikrishna (**10/77**). His other friend, Dantavakra who was a friend of Shishupal was also killed (**10/78**) when he came to help Salva.

197. Once passing through Naimisharnya, while he was on pilgrimage, Balaram got angry with Romharshan Suta. His (Suta's) fault was that on his arrival, while all Brahmins rose to welcome him but Suta seated on a high pedestal didn't get up. Balaram charged a *kusha* against him and that killed him (**10/78**). On the advice of the Brahmins, Balaram appointed his son (Ugrashrava Suta) as the chairperson of the spiritual conference, and after killing the demon Balvala who had wreaked havoc at Naimisharnya, he himself took to other pilgrim places to exonerate himself against the sin committed by killing Romharshna Suta. He visited all the pilgrimage places (**10/79**) and sacred rivers including *gaya*, *venkatachala*, *srirangam*, *shivakanchi*, *vishnukanchi* etc and came back to Naimisharnya and performed *ygya* to honour Brahmins.

198. Sudama was His childhood friend (**10/80**) when Srikrishna studied at the *gurukul* of Sandipani. They didn't meet after they separated from school. Sudama and his wife were in dire poverty but they maintained constant worship of *srihari*. Once on the behest of his wife, Sudama came to see Him in Dwarka. Srikrishna accorded a warm welcome to His childhood friend and enjoyed the gift of flaked rice brought by him. When Sudama got back to his home, he found that his old hut was transformed (**10/81**) into a fort with all facilities of luxury. Although he never longed for that Srikrishna had blessed him because He had enjoyed his gift of flaked rice.

199. It was a rare occasion of occurrence of complete sun eclipse. There was a large gathering at *kurukshetra*, a famous pilgrimage place established by Prashuram where he had created *panch-samantaka* (five great lakes filled with the blood of demonic *kshatriya*). All *kaurvava*, *pandav*, natives of Dwarka, and *vrajvahsi* including Nanda, *gopa* and *gopi* had gathered there to have glimpse of the eclipse. After the eclipse was over (**10/82**), they had taken their bath in the *panch-samantaka* and offered liberal gifts to the Brahmins. This occasion proved a great get together also since natives from *vrindvan* had met Srikrishna after a long time. *Gopis* were glad to meet Him again. Draupadi was busy in interacting with the wives of Srikrishna. All His eight queens (Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambvati, Satya, Maitravinda, Kalindi, Bhadra, and Lakshamana) narrated (**10/83**) the incidence leading to their marriage with Him. On the behest of Narada, Vasudev performed *ygya* (**10/84**) at *kurukshetra* and invoked the blessings of all the saints gathered there. Natives of Dwarka were the last to leave *kurukshetra* after they bade farewell to others.

200. The earlier children of Devaki who were killed by Kams were brought to her womb by *yogmaya*. Initially they were sons of Marichi and his wife U r n a (**10/85**) a godly couple of the heaven. Seeing Saraswati, his own creation, lust prevailed upon Brahma. The sons of U r n a openly ridiculed Brahma's act. This made Brahma angry and he cursed them to become demon. In the first birth of demons they were sons of Hirnyakashipu, and in later birth they became sons of Devaki. On the request of Devaki they were brought back from *sutala lok* of Bali by Srikrishna and Balarama. Devaki became so emotional to see her six dead sons back to her, that her breast began oozing milk automatically. They all took her breast milk and became enlightened. They offered their prayer to Devaki, Vasudev and Srikrishna and left for heaven.

201. Balaram wanted to marry his sister, Subhadra to Duryodhana. This was against the collective choice of Srikrishna, Vasudev and Devaki. Consequently, Arjun was invited (10/86) and he abducted Subhadra for marriage.

202. Hearing all the pastimes of Srikrishna, Parikshit again asked (10/87) Shukdeo to clarify as to how Narayana maintain both *sagun* and *nirgun* form simultaneously. Shukdeo mentioned that there was hardly any difference between the two, and to support his view point he mentioned that the same query was made to Sandana in one of the spiritual gatherings. He had replied that even if a step falls on grass or stone the load is finally taken by the earth. Another example he mentioned was of honey which is the wonderful blend of all the fragrances of flowers.....so is the case with Narayana.

203. As advised by Narada, Vrukasur got success in getting a boon from Shiva (10/88) that if he put his hand over anybody's head that would cause immediate death of that person. To grab Parvati, wife of Shiva, Vrukasur wanted to try the boon over Shiva's head. Shiva ran away and he began chasing him. Narayan came to Shiva's rescue in the form of a Brahmin. He convinced Vrukasur that the boon of Shiva was ineffective and he could try that over his own head. Vrukasur put his hand over his own head and dropped dead and Shiva's trouble was over.

204. In order to chose the presiding deity of their ygya, saints once deputed Bhrugu to try three of the trinities, *Brahma*, Vishnu and Shiva (10/89). When Bhrugu went to see *Brahma*, he deliberately didn't pay his salutation to him. Brahm became angry over his lack of initial courtesy of doing a salutation. From there he went to Shiva. At the first sight, He was embraced by Shiva but Bhrigu demonstrated a lukewarm response to Shiva. This irritated Shiva who wielded his trident over his audacity. Bhrigu had to hurriedly leave the place after intervention of Uma. When Bhrigu went to Vishnu, he was

sleeping. He kicked in his chest. Vishnu got up and with due humility took the saint's feet in his hands and enquired whether his foot was injured by his hard chest. He also assured the sage that since onwards he would always hold his footprint over His chest. This pleased Bhrugu and Vishnu thus got the position of the presiding deity in the *ygya* of the saints.

205. There was a Brahmin in Dwarka who lost his three sons (**10/89**) in succession immediately after their birth. The Brahmin assessed the cause of their death as the sin of the king of Dwarka, Srikrishna. Arjun couldn't tolerate this accusation and he assured the Brahmin that his fourth son would be protected by him using his mighty *gandiva* failing that he would self-immolate. Despite Arjun's sincere efforts of cordoning the brahmin's house with his arrows, the fourth child was born but mysteriously disappeared. When Arjun was about to self-immolate, Srikrishna intervened and took him on his chariot to a far flung place surrounded by pitch darkness. The way was lit by *sudarshna chakra*. There they met *bhuma purush* seated over *anant*. Srikrishna offered a prayer to *bhuma purush* who on getting pleased welcome them and mentioned that Arjun and Srikrishna were incarnations in the form of Nar and Narayana sent to the earth to liberate the earth from the demonic influence. Srikrishna later, from there picked up the dead sons of the Brahmin. On coming back those children were handed over to the Brahmin.

Sadhana skandh
(31 chapters)

- (i) Dwarka turns into a desolated place as all the *yaduvanshi* fight among themselves. The last survivor shifts to Mathura after the ultimate ascension of Srikrishna to *vaikunthalok*.
- (ii) Before His ultimate departure Srikrishna divulges ways and means to attain Him with a view to consolidate one's devotion on Him.
- (iii) The topic of *bhagawata dharma* is covered from chapters 11/2 though 11/5 in the form of legend of Nimi attending nine ascetic sons of Rishabha.
- (iv) Significance of *katha nadi* and *ganga nadi* are cited by *Brahma* in chapter 11/6 when he came to meet Srikrishna and reminded Him that He was over the planet earth for over 125 years.
- (v) The conversation of Srikrishna with Udhava (11/7) revealed that on the seventh day ocean would submerge Dwarka and the *yaduvansha* was on the brink of elimination due to inner fighting. He would then leave for His divine abode and immediately after His ascension advent of *kaliyuga* would take place.
- (vi) The style of living can be shaped through either way of life, i.e., *gyan yoga*, *karm yoga*, and *bhakti yoga* (11/20) . In 11/27, details of *kriya yoga* is given for regular performances.
- (vii) River *sarswati* is mentioned in 11/30 to be west flowing near Dwarka before it falls into the ocean. It seems this was another *sarswati* river than the one said to merge at Allahabad, *prayagraj* because that is said to merge with *ganga* and *Yamuna*.
- (viii) 11/31 completes the full circle of events which were set out in 1/14 and 1/15.

206. Once Samb (son of Jambvati) and his other friends were in the forest for picnic. His friends played a joke (11/1) with the sages assembled at that place. They took Samb dressed as pregnant woman to the sages and asked whether the child would be male or female. The sages replied that an iron pestle would be born and that would annihilate the *yaduvansha*. They returned a little perturbed over the forecast of the sages. When Samb was undressed an iron pestle was found under the garb. It was taken to Ugrasen and the story was narrated. It was decided to destroy the pestle by grinding that in the powder form. It couldn't be completely ground, and one small piece was still left over. The entire powder with the one small piece was thrown into the ocean. All these events were never brought to the knowledge of Srikrishna.

- The grounded powder got flocculated over the water along the coast line and turned into long grasses. It was these long grass-blades which were used to kill each other, later when *yaduvanshi* began fighting (11/30) among themselves

- The left over one small piece was swallowed by a fish which fell in the trap of a hunter, called Jara. While processing the fish the hunter got that piece, and he used that to make pointed tip of one of his arrows. He, coincidentally, used that arrow to hit Srikrishna's sole of the left feet (11/30), mistaking His red sole as the red eye of a deer, and that brought about the end to His life.

207. Narada used to frequently pay visits to Dwarka. Once he met (11/2) Vasudev and learnt how he was blessed with Srikrishna as his son. During the discourse Vasudev enquired, "How can one get rid of the cycle of birth and death?" Narada mentioned that the observance of *bhagwat dharma* would only do that. Narada cited the reference of a similar

question asked by Nimi to **nine ascetic** sons of Rishabha in the lineage of Priyavrata. **First** ascetic had mentioned that doing everything as the command of *srihari* is the crux of *bhagawat dharma*. The **second** ascetic told that those who see *srihari* in all the beings is the *bhagawat* (devotee) of the first order. Those who hate anti-*bhagawat* followers is *bhagawat* of the second order. Those who don't care about any of the *bhagawat* followers and worship only *archa-vigrah* (statue of *srihari* as deity) in the temples, is the *bhagawata* of the third order. The **third** ascetic (11/3) covered the characteristics of *maya*. The **fourth** one explained how to get over *maya*. The **fifth** one dwelt upon the ultimate form of Narayana. *Karmyoga* was the topic of the **sixth** ascetic. He discussed the meaning of *karma*, *akarma* and *vikarma*. The do's according to scriptures are the *karma*, and don'ts of the scriptures are in the category of *akarma*. The deeds performed violating the guidelines of the scriptures are *vikarma*. All the incarnations of Narayana was covered in detail (11/4) by the **seventh** ascetic. The **eighth** one explained about the consequences (11/5) of unending hankering for the worldly pleasures. The **ninth** one was requested to specify the suitability of worshipping which form of Narayana at what time.

208. Once *Brahma* (11/6) and other gods came to see Srikrishna in Dwarka and they submitted that He was on the earth over 125 years and He was prayed to come to *vaikunth*. Srikrishna confided that *yadu* were growing arrogant, and steadily their behaviour had become similar to the cruel demons. He wanted them to be eliminated before He left for *vaikunth*. *Brahma* and other gods thus informed (by Him) left the place. Srikrishna was once informed about lot of bad omen experienced by the natives of Dwarka. He advised them to visit *prabhash kshetra* and offer oblations to *pitra* and *devas* with due respect to Brahmins. He also mentioned that it was this

place where Chandrama got rid of his physical afflictions caused by the curse of Daksha.

209. When Udhava learnt about the hint of Srikrishna leaving for His divine abode, he came (11/7) with a heavy heart to Him. Srikrishna revealed that it was true and on the seventh day whole of Dwarka would be submerged into ocean. The day of His ascension would bring the advent of *kaliyuga* also. He advised Udhava to move freely on the earth enjoying the self-pleasure of meditating deeply inside his heart about the universal spirit. Udhava offered a sincere prayer on His lotus feet and wanted to know more about most appropriate mode of devotion. Srikrishna cited the example of the conversation between the king Yadu and the mendicant Duttatreya. Similar question was made by the king to the mendicant. Duttatreya revealed to the king that he learnt the art of self-concentration from **twenty four** teachers present around in various natural forms, and they are: **earth, air, sky, water, fire, moon, sun, pigeon bird, python, ocean, moth, bee, elephant, bee keeper, deer, fish, Pingla (a sex worker), kurar bird, child, maiden girl, arrow-smith, snake, spider and bhrungi (wasp) insect.**

(i) Earth teaches to observe endurance

(ii) air's message is contentment

(iii) sky demonstrates the expanse to infinity. Everything including rain, winter, summer goes under the sky but the sky is not involved in those happenings. Similarly a household should keep himself like the canopy of sky and not get involved into the murky worldly happenings.

(iv) water is the best cleaner

(v) fire absorbs everything

(vi) moon is dispassionate and is not worried about waxing and waning. Similarly, the incidents might influence the physical body but not the soul

(vii) sun absorbs water but discards them as rain. Soul may absorb through senses but must discard them finally

(viii) pigeon bird is attached to their family to the extent of death. Once a pair of pigeons were nesting over a tree. In course of time they got offspring. One day, while they were out a hunter had entrapped their fledglings. The female pigeon when returned saw the condition of their children and under emotion she dashed into the trap of the hunter. The male pigeon could understand the implications but he also couldn't help and fell prey to the hunter. Thus the entire family was eliminated. Similarly a household should learn that he should not fall prey to elimination under emotion rather take use of the prudence.

(ix) python never hunts his food. It comes to him on his own.

(x) ocean is not affected by summer or rains

(xi) moth sacrifices life fascinated by the glow of the flames

(xii) bee has the traits of collecting the finest things

(xiii) elephant is trapped by the hunters deceived by the presence of a female elephant. A ditch is covered with green branches near the female elephant. When the mighty male elephant comes closer to her, he is trapped in the ditch. Women are the ditch and one should learn the lesson from the elephants.

(xiv) beekeeper robs the collection of the bees. Over possessed wealth is bound to be robbed

(xv) deer / doe is enchanted by the sex inciting music which lays a trap by the hunter. Vibhandak *rishi* produced Rishyshringa from the womb of a doe. Although he was an accomplished saint, he was influenced by female dancers and musicians and brought back to the kingdom to his father-in-law (Rompad) to fetch rains for his kingdom was stalked by famine (9/23). The message is to keep away from sex inciting music.

(xvi) fish under temptation of food is trapped by the angler

(xvii) Pingla was a sex worker of Mithila. She used to have several unslept nights expecting a visitor. She was once enlightened, and stopped expecting any visitor. She began enjoying the sound sleep. Her message is that the object of expectation should only be god in one's heart, and nobody else.

(xviii) A kurar bird when in possession of a meat-piece is attacked by several other birds. Be dispassionate, and never possess more than required.

(xix) child is always care free and self-immersed in his pleasure

(xx) once a maiden girl was preparing rice using pestle in a mortar to honour the guests. Her bangles produced sound on every movement of her hand. She broke them until only one bangle remained on her wrist. Even two were producing sound; the message is that self pleasure is attained alone and not in a group.

(xxi) arrow smith works with full concentration and story goes that once an arrow smith couldn't notice the marching army by his side. Self-concentration needs to be of this nature.

(xxii) snake never build a resort and keeps enjoying by moving around

(xxiii) like spider god creates and wraps up the world

(xxiv) wasp transforms a nascent insect with the traits of a wasp by constant buzzing around that.

210. Duttatreya also warned against the various demands of the body. One should be self contained and hankering after satisfying the need of the senses (eye, nose, palate etc.) need to be discouraged. The life of a human being is precious since it is endowed with the faculty of comprehending the presence of god. Srikrishna also advised (**11/9**) Udhava to learn from this story.

Srikrishna – Udhava dialogue

211. When asked about the characteristics of a bonded soul and a free soul, Srikrishna mentioned (11/11) that these states are caused by *avidya* and *atmvidya* respectively. Another query about the traits of a true devotee was addressed by the presence of compassion in him towards all beings.

212. Srikrishna advised that keeping company of His devotees (11/12) is the paramount requirement to please Him. His devotees, viz., Prahlad, Dhruva, Jamban, Sugreeva, Hanuman and others are one of the dearest to Him not because of their learning or knowledge but their unalloyed devotion to Him. Regarding His omnipresence He mentioned, “There are infinite ways I am present. Invisible fire is a brilliant example. It manifests when effort is made to get it. Sound is another example. Someone speaks because of Me only. It is I who first enters *mooladhar chakra* as *para vani* which only devotee with sincere meditation can hear. When *para vani* rises to *manipurak chakra* (navel) it is *psyanti vani*. Further upwards at *vishudhi chakra* (throat) it is *madhyma vani*. Thereafter it comes out of mouth as *vaikhari vani* (expression) and is audible as well as comprehensible by the beings.

213. About three *guna* (i.e., *satva*, *raja* and *tama*) (11/13), Srikrishna clarified, “They are not the attributes of soul rather they represent nature which comes in physical world’s domain. One can mend his ways and adopt *satva guna* by overcoming the tendency to indulge in *raja* and *tama guna*. This can conveniently be achieved by constant contemplation on Me.”

214. On the form (11/14) of meditation, Srikrishna said, “Sit erect on ground with legs folded. Put the hands in the lap. Close the eyes and practice slow inhale and exhale intervened by (either followed or preceded by) no breathing for a comfortable time. By practice extend the time of no breathing and imagine the letter *aum* (ॐ) is inscribed in the heart.

Further to this, imagine that inside the heart is the louts flower where sun, moon, and fire are placed one over the other. Narayana is surrounded and lighted by the fire. He is in standing posture and His four hands have *chakra*, *sankha*, *gada* and *padma*. He is wrapped up in yellow silk (*peethambra*) magnified by several ornaments over His body dominated by *srikaustabha* and *srivats* over the chest. He is smiling with a benign forward sight.”

215. He further revealed that such meditation brings yogic potential and the devotee attains several extraordinary powers (11/15). There are eighteen such powers, out of which eight are His attributes (to be shared with only rare blessed ones) and the rest is conveniently attainable by the able devotees.

216. Udhava asked, “How does a being lose His sight when He is omnipresent ?” He clarified by citing an example of Arjun when he was puzzled on the battle field with *kaurav* and He had shown him His cosmic form. He mentioned that His infinite form can well (11/16) be comprehended by imagining, “Among subtle things I am *jeeva*. I am *aum* (ॐ) among the alphabets. Among verses I am *gayatri*. Among gods, I am *Indra*. Among *vasu*, I am *agni*. Among *aditya*, I am Vishnu. Among *rudra*, I am *nila-lohita*. Among demons, I am *Prahlad*. Among stars I am moon. Among *sidha*, I am *Kapila*. Among *pitra*, I am *aryama*. Among *prajaptis* I am *Daksha*. Among birds, I am *Garuda*. Among cows, I am *kamdhenu*. Among *brahm-rishi*, I am *Bhrugu*. Among royal sages, I am *Manu*. Among divine sages, I am *Narada*.

217. When asked about His different forms (11/17) in different *yuga*, He mentioned, “During *satya yuga* only one community *hans* was there. *Pranava* was the *veda*. People were self contended and perfect (*krita-kritya*). That is why this *yuga* is also called *krita yuga*. He Himself was in form of *dharma*, represented by bull having four legs of *tapsya* (penance), *sauch* (purification rites), *daya* (compassion), and

satya (truth). During *treta* my form was of *ygya*. There are four communities: *Brahmin* from My mouth, *kshatriya* from my arms, *vaishya* from my thighs, *shudra* from My feet. One's life is put into four stages of *brahmcharya* (studentship), *grahstha* (household), *vanprashtha* (retirement), *sanyas* (renunciation). Among all communities and stages one needs to perform appropriate actions as My command.

218. Upon extent of necessity of adopting renunciation (11/19) , Srikrishna cited the dialogue of Bheeshma and Yudhishtira. Bheeshma mentioned, "Actions performed to attain heavenly pleasure is futile because such pleasure is transitory in nature. Concentrate on contemplation of His lotus feet and love reciting His glory. His devotees should be respected more than Him."

219. Certain disciplinary practices (11/19) are essential to perform consistently for they help in straightening the path of devotion and they are *yama*, *niyama*, *sham*, *dam*, *titiksha*, *dhairya*, *dana*, *tapasya*, *shoorta*, *satya*, *rita*, *tyaga*, *ygya*, *dakshina* etc. (conduct, regularity, control, restrain, contentment, endurance, charity, austerity, confidence, consistent, modesty, sacrifice, oblation, offering).

220. Elaborating on *gyan*, *karm* and *bhakti yoga* (11/20) , He (Srikrishna) mentioned, "*gyan yoga* is dispassionate state of mind expecting nothing in return against performances / actions / deeds. *Karm yogi* has passion for action / work and he also nurses expectation of return, but he never laments in adverse situations. *Bhakti yogi* is like *karm yogi* and he is involved in actions and expects return but he does everything in His name and he consistently loves recitation of His glory. He further quoted from *veda* (11/21) that there are three principal sections in *veda* and they are *gyan*, *upasana*, and *karm*. Neither of them has any demerit and any one of them can be independently practiced.

221. Spiritual building blocks (11/22) are termed as *tatva* and their grouping and numbering have been done variously but broadly they are all the same. There are **nine natural elements** + **eleven physical elements** + **five knowledge elements** + **three guna** = 28. Some people count them only twenty five when *guna* are considered to be assimilated in other elements. **Nine natural elements** are *purush*, *prakriti*, *mahatatva*, *ahankar*, *akash*, *vayu*, *jal* and *prithvi*. **Eleven physical elements** are defined by action organs (5), sense organs (5), and mind (1). Five action organs are *vak* (mouth), *pani* (hand), *pad* (feet), *payu* (*phallus*), and *upastha* (anus); five sense organs are *shrotra* (ear), *twacha* (skin), *chakshu* (eye), *nasika* (nose), and *rasana* (tongue). **Five objects of knowledge elements** are *shavda* (oral expression), *sparsha* (touch), *rupa* (sight), *rasa* (taste), and *gandh* (smell). Three *guna* (traits) are *satva*, *raja*, and *tama* (dispassion, passion, and greed)

222. When Udhava wanted to know about the difference (11/22) between *purush* and *prakriti*, He clarified that one is soul and the other is body. Regarding carrying of *karma* from past life, He mentioned that mind is built by the residue of the past lives and it helps in the functioning of the body. He also specified that soul is quite different from them, i.e., the mind and the body.

223. To elucidate His points, Srikrishna narrated one story (11/23). There was a wealthy Brahmin in Ujjain. He was a great miser. He neither shared his expenses with his friends or relatives nor spent any money for religious purposes. Subsequently he lost his property and became a pauper. He sustained on alms but he observed complete and continued silence and never reacted to anybody's provocation. Wisdom had dawned upon him by a simple incident when he injured his tongue with his teeth while eating. It occurred to him that neither tongue nor teeth was at fault. It was just an incidence.

Similarly, in one's life inevitable occurs automatically and life is an incidence. Proper contemplation brings about salvation. Pururava is another example of this. (11/26)

224. Srikrishna explained *sankhya yoga* to Udhava, while explaining the process involved in creation (11/24). He revealed, “ It is *prakriti* which created large expanse of causative water body. I was sleeping afloat over My serpent couch in water. From my navel *Brahma* sprouted over the lotus stem who created *bhuh* (earth), *bhuvh* (space), and *svah* (heaven). Earth became the resort of human beings and others. Space is occupied by lesser gods, and other creatures, and heaven is the abode of gods. *Mahar lok*, *tap lok* and *Jana lok* were created as a resort of saints, sages and *siddha* . For demons the nether-world of several categories was created, viz., *atal*, *sutal*, *vital* etc. Beyond all these is the resort of my devotees (*bhakta*), and this is known as *param dham*.

225. He further explained (11/27) the procedure of *kriya yoga*. This involves the stages of worship to *archa vigraha* (deity). Deity could be of any material. If it is made of sand on a river bank, it requires invoking Him in the beginning and on conclusion it requires a warm send off. The idols of metal, stone etc require invoking (*pran pratishtha*) only once when it is installed for the first time. No send off is required for the idols on conclusion of daily worship. The images on paper or painting hardly require any invocation or send off. The devotee after bath performs *anga nyas* and *kara nyas* (which means invoking Him on devotees various organs) by sitting opposite to the deity. He fills with water three small pots of *argha*, *padya* and *achamaniya*. Before filling the pot with water, devotee should concentrate on me by pronouncing *pranava mantra* and carry out *pranayam* thrice reciting the *aum mantra* (ॐ नमो नारायणाय) and touch the pots to be filled with water. Nine goddesses (*vimala*, *utkarshini*, *gyana*, *kriya*, *yoga*, *prahni*, *satya*, *ishana* and *anugraha*) are invoked to be present,

followed by invoking My divine insignia (*sudarshan chakra, panchjanya sankha, kaumodaki gada, nandak khadag, sarang dhanusha, vana, hala and moosala.*) and imagining them to be positioned in eight directios. They are worshipped with my *srivatsa, kaustabha and vaijanti mala*. Thereafter My eight spiritual attendants (*nand, sunanda, prachand, chanda, mahabala, bala, kumud, kumudekshna*), are imagined to be welcome and postioned appropriately with due worship. Garuda and Hanuman are worshipped in my front, whereas *durga, vinayaka, vyas and viswakshena* are worshipped in four cardinal quarters. My worship should continue with offering me sandal paste, scents, fragrance, flowers, delicious sweets and food items. Burning of *ghee* lamp and incense should be continued during my worship. Recitation of sixteen stanza of *purusha shukta* is dear to me. The worship is concluded by offering oblation of *ghee* in fire reciting *mantra* (ॐ नमो नारायणाय) and always imagining me to be accepting the oblations in fire in *chaturbhuja* form equipped with divine insignia. At the end prostration is performed to the deity seeking shower of blessings from Me. My divine attendants are respectfully offered a farewell send off.

226. Udhava finally offered his sincere prayer to Him. Srikrishna advised him to go to Badrikashrama (11/29) and stay there on the bak of *alagnanda*; and never lament for His absence. While moving out Udhava sought his foot-sandal (*charanpaduka*) to be carried with him as an idol of worship. He put the *charanpaduka* over his head and set out for *Badrikashrama*.

227. Once holding the *sudharma* conferences, (11/30) Srikrishna proposed that to ward against the bad omen being witnessed regularly by the natives of Dwarka, it is advisable to visit *sankhodar kshetra* by elders and children, and *prabhas kshetra* by young people. They were to offer respects and liberal gifts to Brahmins at those sacred places. Accordingly

accompanied by Srikrishna and Balaram, they set out for the sacred places crossing the west flowing *saraswati*. After the necessary religious rites, they lost their orientation and took to liquor which vitiated their mind. Fierce fighting began among themselves and soon they began killing each other. Srikrishna and Balaram also joined the spree and using the blade of grass grown from the powder of the cursed iron they killed the arrogant natives. Balaram, thereafter, took to ultimate meditation and left behind his mortal remains. Srikrishna moved, subsequently to a nearby *peepal* tree and sat over a pedestal with His left leg resting over the right one. One hunter, Jara, in the meanwhile mistook the sole of His foot as an indicator of presence of a deer and he charged his deadly arrow over Him. The arrow has tip of the cursed iron piece. When Jara came near Him, he was deeply grieved and offered a sincere prayer to Him. In the meanwhile, Daruka, his charioteer also came and he saw that His divine insignia *sudarshan chakra*, *panchjanya sankha* were circum-ambulating Him and soon they moved towards His divine abode. The chariot also disappeared in thin air. Daruka began weeping and crying but he was consoled by Srikrishna and advised to go immediately to Dwarka and advise all surviving natives to move to Indraprashtha because soon Dwarka would be submerged into the ocean.

228. As advised Daruka (11/31) moved to Dwarka. He narrated the entire event to Vasudev and Ugrasen. In the meanwhile gods assembled near Him and began showering flowers. He closed His louts eyes and His physical form turned into a sight of lightening and vanished instantly into the cosmos.

229. All survivors from Dwarka, rushed to the site of His departure. Vasudev, Devaki, Rohini couldn't bear the sight and dropped dead over the ground. The principal queens of Srikrishna also entered the burning fire. Several others

followed the suit. Arjun also came to the site but he could compose himself by virtue of His teaching of Geeta. He performed the last rites of *yadava* and took Vraj to Indraprastha. He was sole survivor and being the son of Anirudha was crowned inheritor king of Yadu dynasty. Third day, the ocean expanded and engulfed entire Dwarka except His palace, and this palace is said to enjoy His eternal presence for the benefits of His devotees.

Mukund maya skandh

(13 chapters)

The future kings and rulers of *kaliyuga* is predicted.**Creations of *veda* and *purana* elaborated****Markandeya visualises *balmukund* and experiences His divine manifestations****Parikshit gets salvation on the conclusion of *srimadbhaagawata* by Shukedeo.**

230. Several dynasties (12/1) in varying spans of time had been predicted to rule. Later, down the eras, Chanyakya (also called *vatsyayan*, *kautilya*) is referred to cause the end of Nand dynasty and help establish the *mauryavanshai* kings, lead by Chandragupta Maurya. Pushyamitra Shung the commander of the *mauryanshi* king will grab the kingdom by killing the existing ruler. He will establish the rule of *shung vansha*. Thereafter *kanv vansha* will succeed.

231. The advent of *kaliyuga* (12/2) is marked by change in nature of the rulers. They would mostly be cruel and robbers in nature. The tyranny of misrule shall end by the incarnation of *kalki* known as Vishnuyasha in the Brahmin family from the place known as Shambala. It is also mentioned that brother of Shantanu (father of Bheeshma) named as Devapi, and another person Maru, from Ikshavaku dynasty said to be staying in a village called Kalap, would help initiate the *varnashrma dharma* while *kalki* would establish the rule of law.

232. The astronomical signs (12/2) marked by presence of *saptarishi* (alpha-ursa-majoris) in *magha nakshatra* testifies the advent of *kaliyuga*, end of Mahabharata and crowning of Parikshit as the sovereign king. *saptharishi* stays in one *nakshatra* for a period of one hundred years. This is the period when Shukdeo narrated *srimadbhaagawata* to him. The end of *kaliyuga* and beginning of *satyayuga* are said to be marked

with the presence of *saptarishi* in *aswini nakshatra*. The sun, moon and Jupiter will have their union in *pushya nakshatra*.

233. It is said in *satya yuga*, *dharma* has four attributes: truth, penance, compassion, and charity (12/3). In *treta* it loses one quarter (truth), and the other three remains. In *dwapar* only last two quarters remain, while in *kaliyuga* the last quarter of charity marks the *dharma*. Normally what one achieves in *satya yuga* by meditation, is attained by performing *ygya* in *treta*. What is obtained from following rituals in worship in *dwapar*, is attained by recitation of His glory in *kaliyuga*.

234. Veda and Purana: *Veda* has its genesis from *Brahma* (12/6). Initially *Brahma* heard *anahata nada* in the form of *Aum* (ॐ). He gave an expression to this, and this became *veda* which was handed over to Marichi and others. In *dwapar* seeing the short memory of human beings, *Srikrishna dwaipayana* *vyas* put *veda* into four parts. First one called *rik veda* was given to Paila. The second one called *yaju veda* was given to Vaishampayana. Jamini was given *sam veda*, and Sumantu got the last one *atharva veda*. These parts are also variously called *bahvarucha* for *rik*, *nigada* for *yaju*, *chandoga* for *sam*, and *angiras* for *atharva*.

235. There is a famous story. *Ygyavalk* (12/6) was an illustrious disciple of *Vaisampayana*. The latter was afflicted by the sin of killing a *brahmin*. His other students offered to perform a ritual called *charkadhvaryu* to free him from the sin. *Ygyavalka* didn't agree because that ritual was not enough to get rid of the sin. He offered a penance, he would perform on behalf of his *guru*. *Vaisampayana* didn't like the proposal and he became displeased with *Ygyavalka*. He asked *Ygyavalka* to leave his *ashram* and disown the knowledge imparted to him about *yaju veda*. *Ygyavalk*, while leaving the *ashram*, vomited out what he had learnt from his *guru*. Other students who wanted to learn the *veda* wanted to take the vomited

material but it was not permitted for *brahmins* to pick up the vomited stuff. They therefore transformed into *tittir* birds and picked up the stuff. That is why, thus collected and retrieved *yaju veda*, is also called *taittereya sanhita*. Later, Ygyavalk pleased sun god, and learnt *yaju veda* from him, which became famous as *vajsaneya sanhita*.

236. Vedas were followed by composition of other scriptures (12/7) called *purana*. This has again the genesis from Vyas, Romharshan, and six students of the latter. These six students were Traiyaruni, Kasyap, Savarni, Akritvarna, Vaisampayan and Harit. Suta had learnt *purana* from his father Romharshna as well as from six of his illustrious students. *Purana* are **eighteen** in numbr: *Brahma purana*, *Padma purana*, *Vishnu purana*, *Shiva purana*, *Ling purana*, *Garuda purana*, *Narada purana*, *Bhagawata purana* (this book), *Agni purana*, *skandha purana*, *Bhavisya purana*, *Brahmvaivartya purana*, *Markandeya purana*, *Vamana purana*, *Varaha purana*, *Matsya purana*, *Kurma purana*, and *Brahamand purana*.

237. Markandeya was a great meditating saint having his *ashram* (12/9) near the Himalayas on the bank of *pushpabhadra* river. His deep meditation invited the jealousy of Indra. He tried to disturb his performance and sent several celestial dancers but all went in vain. *Srihari* pleased by his meditation came to him in the form of Nara and Narayana. They blessed him and enquired whether he wanted any boon. Markandeya was a self conteneded saint. He expressed his desire for the vision of His *maya*. Nara and Narayana blessed him to be so and left for Badrikashrama. Once when the saint was in deep meditation, he felt that there was all around heavy down pour. Nothing was left unsubmerged and there was only water and water all around. He began running for shelter. He

could see a banyan tree. On the northern branch of the tree there was a basket made of the leaves. Inside the basket a charming child (*balmukund*) was lying on His back holding His left foot thumb in His mouth. He was smiling and breathing very vigorously. The moment Markandeya went closer to Him, he was drawn inside His stomach pulled by His vigorous breathing. Inside he saw the entire cosmos. His hermitage was also seen inside. When he could finish the glimpse inside he was suddenly ejected out. His meditation was disrupted and he began searching to locate the tree he saw in his vision. He couldn't find anything, neither rain nor water. He could realise the entire scene as the manifestation of *srihari's maya* because everything He showed him was caused by *balmukund*.

238. *Srihari* is known to have infinite manifestations (12/11). Earth is His feet. Heaven is His head. Sky is His navel. Eyes are sun. Nose is air. Ears are cardinal directions. Prajapati is His phallus. Death is His anus. Directional deities are His arms. Moon is His mind. *Yama* makes His eyebrows. Dignity forms upper lip, greed forms lower lip. His teeth are moon-light. *Maya* is His smile. Trees form His body hair. Clouds make hair over His head. Human beings are His palm. The *kaustabha mani* over His chest is the universal consciousness. *Srivatsa* is the brilliance of the gems. *Guna* (*satva, raja, tama*) make the *vanamala*. The song of the verses make His *peethambra*. *Sankhya* and *Yoga* are his ear-rings. *Brahmaloka* is His crown. His *gada* is super consciousness. *Chakra* is fire. *Sankha* represents water element. His *saranga* bow is time. Sky is His sword. Brilliance, wealth (*lakshmi*), knowledge and renunciation make the lotus in His hand. Nature is His couch (*shesha sayya*). *Vaikuntha* is His divine umbrella. His self power is *laksmi*. Garuda is *Vedas*. Scriptures are His commanders, *viswashruta* and *viswaksena*. Eight *sidhis*

are made of *anima*, *garima* etc. He Himself manifests in *Vasudeva*, *Sankarshan*, *Pradyumna* and *Anirudha*. Sun and fire are His direct manifestations worthy of all sorts of worship.

239. Pralaya (dissolution) : The end of the creation, dissolution (*pralaya*) (12/4) is of four types: *nitya*, *naimittik*, *prakritik*, and *atyantik*.

- Every moment, everything in the creation is changing like the flowing stream of water. This ever changing natural phenomena is called *nitya pralaya*.

- The end of one day of *Brahma* (called *kalp*) takes place after repeat of cycles of one thousand sets of the four *yuga* (*satya*, *treta*, *dwapar*, *kali*). Fourteen Manu rule during one *kalp*. At the end of one *kalp*, the night of *Brahma* begins, and he goes to sleep. The creation is wrapped up in *Brahma*, and such phenomena is called *naimittik pralaya*.

- The *pralaya* after one hundred years of *Brahma* (end of two *prardha*) is called *prakritik pralaya* when everything including *Brahma* is wrapped up in Narayana. The earth experiences outbreak all pervading fire caused by *shankarshana*. No organism or life exists at all over the earth. This continues for one hundred years (on *kalp* scale). This is followed by rains for one hundred (*kalp* scale) years. The earth dissolves completely in water and there is no trace of any land mass. Only Narayana exists afloat on His serpent couch. Thereafter, strong wind prevails and the water is totally evaporated leaving only sky all around. The whole gamut of development is called *prakritik pralaya*.

- When the ultimate liberation of an entity is attained, it is called *atyantik pralaya* of that entity because after that it never falls again in the cycle of creation.

240. Parikshit Departs: Shukdeo finally concluded (12/5) his week -long discourse and reminded Parikshit not to worry about the impending end of life. The repeated cycles of birth and death continues until the soul severs the contact with body. It is like wick and oil, that when they are in contact lamp exists. One has to meditate only on Him to liberate from the cycle of death and birth. Concluding thus, Shukdeo left the place. Parikshit maintained complete silence after offering him last prayer and warm send off. He contemplated on Narayana. In the meanwhile (12/6), *Takshak* the famous deadly snake, disguised as Brahmin moved out to bite his target, Parikshit. Before biting, he persuaded Kasyapa (a known Brahmin for curing a snake bite) and managed him to go back by offering him huge wealth. The bite of *Takshak* caused break out of immediate fire in the body of Parikshit and he was burnt to ashes. His son, Janmejaya was so much grieved by this incident that he organised the *ygya* where snakes were invoked as oblations. Several snakes lost their lives. *Takshaka* had sought asylum at Indra's place. Janmejaya caused the invocation for both of them and when they together (Indra and *Takshaka*) were pulled towards the fire, Bruhaspati, the preceptor of gods, intervened and dissuaded Janmejaya in doing so. Janmejaya eventually reconciled with the inevitable, and took a peaceful refuge in the lotus feet of Narayana.

Srimann Narayana charnau sharanam prapaddye.

श्रीमन् नारायण चरणौ शरणम् प्रपदे ।

ⁱ The prayer offered by Kunti (*skandh-1, adhyaya-8, shloka-22*) when Parkishita was saved in his mother's womb, and the prayer of mother earth after salvation of Bhauamsur contain the same *shloka* (*skandh-10, adhyaya-59, shloka-26*).